WORLD SOCCER®

The essential football magazine

www.worldsoccer.com

MARCH 2006
£3.30
Australia $9.50
Canada $9.00
USA $6.95
Printed in the UK

FREE WORLD CUP GUIDE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SPECIAL

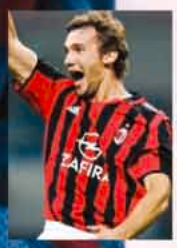
BARCELONA

Have Europe's best team lost the plot?

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS

WOODGATE
England's forgotten man

SHEVCHENKO
Milan's deadly weapon



● 10 OF THE WORLD'S TOP TEENAGERS ● 6 OF THE BEST TRANSFER WINDOW SIGNINGS ● 11 UP-AND-COMING GOALKEEPERS

PLUS

● AFRICAN NATIONS CUP ● TOTAL FOOTBALL REVISITED
● JUAN ROMAN RIQUELME ● PAVEL NEDVED

AOL Keyword: World Soccer

FORSPORT

Call the UK's premier outlet now for all specialised football coaching equipment

www.forsport.co.uk **020 8658 2007**

Books - Current best sellers all available now on-line at www.forsport.co.uk

Coaching the European 3-5-2
Kevin Thelwell
Coaching the 3-5-2 formation provides a unique insight into the development of tactics and strategies in the professional game.

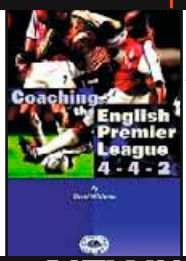
Out Now £19.99

How to Coach a Soccer Team
Tony Carrate
Easy-to-follow drills and clearly illustrated techniques will improve every part of their game and help you develop a winning team.

NEW!! £12.99

English Premier League Academy 1
Rob Gale
This book includes coaching drills, exercises, small sided games and many other ideas you might implement with your players.

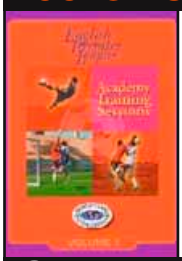
Out Now £15.99



Coaching the English 4-4-2
David Williams
The most comprehensive book written about the English 4-4-2 system.

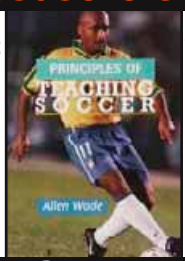
NEW!! £19.99

Books - Current best sellers all available now on-line at www.forsport.co.uk



English Premier League Academy 2
Rob Gale
Follows on from volume one and progresses to the technical aspects of the game in functional situations.

Out Now £15.99

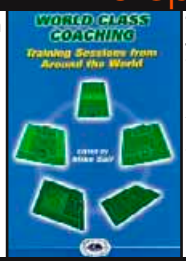


Principles of Teaching Soccer
Allen Wade
In this book the principles of soccer and their relevance to tactical understanding are examined as are the technical options available to players.

Out Now £9.99

Professional Youth Academy Training Sessions
Sam Saif
In this book, Sam Saif shares with you the creative and inspiring training sessions he uses with his Academy teams.

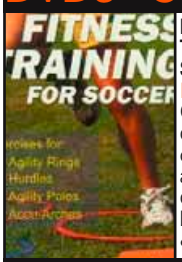
Out Now £15.99



Training Sessions from around the World
Mike Saif
A comprehensive look a the leading training sessions used by the Worlds most creative & innovative clubs.

NEW!! £22.99

DVDs - Current best sellers all available now on-line at www.forsport.co.uk

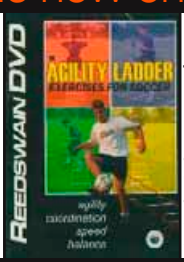


Forsport Fitness Training for Soccer
Roberto Forzoni
Covers change of direction, change of pace, speed, acceleration, deceleration, balance, footwork & agility.

NEW!! £22.99

Coordination & Agility Training With a Soccer Ball
Peter Schreiner
Takes his coordination and agility training method to the next level by introducing a soccer ball to the exercises.

Out Now £22.99



Forsport Agility Ladder Exercises for Soccer
Roberto Forzoni
Proven agility ladder exercises as used at pro clubs. Covers agility, coordination, speed, balance, skill, fast footwork.

Out Now £22.99

Coaching The Italian 4-4-2
Arrigo Sacchi
One of the world's leading football coaches. His attention to detail and coaching of team shape and movement is legendary.

Out Now £22.99

An exclusive range of coaching & training equipment available on-line now

4m Club-Range Speed Foot Ladder
This ideal training aid forces the feet to adapt to extremely fast patterns of footwork by repeating the exercises over and over.

FORSPORT £19.99

1.6m Training Poles
These poles are ideal for drills, small-sided games and conditioning work.

FORSPORT from £2.99

Children's Five Man Wall
Coach the free-kick specialists of the future with this scaled down version of the professional model.

FORSPORT set of 5 £79.99

Speed Hurdle - 12" & 6"
Ideal for speed & agility drills. These plastic speed hurdles are the choice of conditioning coaches world wide.

FORSPORT from £5.99

FORSPORT

Informative, knowledgeable and friendly staff are waiting to take your call now

All products on-line visit
www.forsport.co.uk **020 8658 2007**

MARCH 2006 VOL 46 NO 6
Cover: Carles Puyol & Ronaldinho (Barcelona)

EDITOR
Gavin Hamilton
ART EDITOR
Gary Payne
PRODUCTION EDITOR
Peter Neish
PICTURE EDITOR
Duncan Bond
NEWS EDITOR
Jamie Rainbow
EDITORIAL SECRETARY
June Hiscock
PICTURES
Pictures copyright: Empics, Getty Images, Action Images and Reuters

Thanks this issue to
Mike Hughes, David Rallis

EDITORIAL
King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7261 5737
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7261 7474
E-mail: world_soccer@ipcmedia.com

ADVERTISING
Greg Dunbar, Simon Gerard, Alex Mills
ADVERTORIALS AND SPONSORSHIP
Matt Johnston
PRODUCTION MANAGER
Tom Jennings
PRODUCTION CONTROLLER
Yee Lei Sheng

MANAGING DIRECTOR Paul Williams
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Hamish Dawson

Display Ads +44 (0) 20 7261 5499
Classified Ads +44 (0) 20 7261 2823
Insert sales +44 (0) 20 7261 7710
Back issues +44 (0) 20 7261 5714
Binders +44 (0) 20 8519 3969

International licensing enquiries
+44 (0) 20 7261 7715 or 7082
E-mail: Siriliya_Nawalkar@ipcmedia.com

ipc COUNTRY & LEISURE MEDIA
A part of IPC Media, A Time Warner company

SUBSCRIPTIONS ORDER HOTLINE
+44 (0)845 676 7778
E-mail: ipcsubs@qss-uk.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES
Annual subscription is for 12 months (13 issues, prices include postage) UK: £37.70
Europe/Eire (inc. VAT): 78 euros (airmail)
USA: $89.65 (airmail)
Rest of world: £63.30 (airmail)

SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT
Rockwood House,
9-17 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath,
West Sussex RH16 3DH, England
Tel: +44 (0) 1444 475 675

WORLD SOCCER is a member of
ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES
● A Bola (Portugal) ● Don Balon (Spain) ● Fanatik (Turkey) ● Foot (Belgium) ● Kicker (Germany) ● La Gazzetta dello Sport (Italy) ● Sport Express (Russia) ● TIPS Bladet (Denmark) ● Voetbal International (Holland) ● World Soccer (UK)

MARCH 2006
WORLD SOCCER comment

FOOTBALL never ceases to surprise. The biggest deal of the January transfer window involved Arsenal paying £5million, rising to a possible £12m, for a 16-year-old, Theo Walcott, who had played but a handful of first-team games for Southampton. Teenagers are the new battleground for the game's biggest clubs (see our report, page 40). With Chelsea dominating the transfer market, paying top dollar for the players they want (as well as the players they want to stop other clubs from signing), the search for cheaper, teenage talent has intensified.

FIFA regulations, introduced last year, are designed to stop the international trade in players aged under 18, yet the early signs are that clubs can easily find a way around the new rules. Look at the curious case of Carlos Vela. For some months the Mexican media have been eagerly reporting that Guadalajara had agreed to Vela's transfer to Arsenal. The London club have been more circumspect, refusing to confirm such a deal. Now, in the past month, Spanish club Celta Vigo are reported to have signed the player from Guadalajara, after a move to Arsenal fell through, apparently because Vela was refused a UK work permit. Just one problem with all of this: Vela is only 16 and should, under the new FIFA regulations, stay in Mexico. At least one of the clubs involved is not being entirely honest.

Then we have had the undignified scrap between Chelsea and Manchester United over Nigerian teenager John Obi Mikel. Chelsea refute United's allegations that they turned Mikel's head, yet the player himself admitted during the recent African Nations Cup in Egypt that, yes, he had met Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho and what a nice man he was, too.

Competition between clubs to sign the best players is nothing new of course, as Barcelona found to their cost more than 50 years ago when Alfredo Di Stefano sloped off to Real Madrid. But the race to sign younger and younger players can only end in tears. For every Theo Walcott, there is a Sonny Pike. (Remember Pike, the English wonderkid who was supposed to have a promising career ahead of him with Ajax? Exactly.)

One of the "legitimate" means of bypassing the new FIFA regulations is for the family of a promising young player to move to a new country in search of work, only to find themselves – by happy coincidence – living next door to the training ground of the rich European club that so admire the football skills of their son. But what happens when the player doesn't make the grade? The club won't care about the displaced family; they will have their eyes on their next target.

This month, we are proud to present Part 2 of our World Cup guide. Look out for Part 3 next month, when we will also bring you a complete report of the African Nations Cup finals.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

recycle
When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

SAVE MONEY ON WORLD SOCCER SEE OUR SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER ON PAGE 58

contents

WS WORLD SOCCER MARCH 2006 VOL 46 NO 6

HEADLINERS
6 Jean-Jacques Eydelie
7 Freddy Adu & Carlos Bianchi

DISPATCHES
From our correspondents
14 Africa
16 Italy
20 Israel

COVER STORY
24 Champions League 2nd round

INTERVIEWS
28 Jonathan Woodgate
30 Andrii Shevchenko

SIX OF THE BEST
32 January signings

WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN
Main Men
34 Juan Roman Riquelme
36 Pavel Nedved
37 Julio Dos Santos
Stadiums
38 Cologne & Leipzig

Six of the Best, p32

Vladimir Stojkovic, p76

FOOTBALL MEMORIES
52 Total Football

DIGEST
60 Germany
61 France
62 Rest of Europe
70 The Americas
72 Non-FIFA football
74 Asia/Oceania

TALENT SCOUT
Tomorrow's stars – today
76 Vladimir Stojkovic
77 10 more promising keepers

REGULARS
8 Brian Glanville
10 Far & Wide
12 Jim Holden
13 World Soccer Travel Club
39 Back Issues
44 Keir Radnedge
48 Paul Gardner
50 David Conn
58 Subscriptions
79 Classified Ads
83 World Service
98 The Knowledge

ALL BUNGED UP
ENGLAND: Allegations of corruption at clubs got lost in the furore over the announcement about Sven Goran Eriksson's departure as national team boss. **Page 50**

BEWARE MEXICAN WAVE
LIBERTADORES CUP: Could this be the year a Mexican side finally win South America's top club competition? **Page 70**

COVER STORY: CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2ND ROUND

As the knockout stages begin, doubts have surfaced about favourites Barcelona. **Page 24**

VAN HOOIJDONK REJOINS FEYENOORD

HOLLAND: Pierre Van Hooijdonk returned to the Rotterdam club from NAC Breda in one of January's most controversial moves. **Page 62**

AILTON BURSTS BACK

GERMANY: Controversial Brazilian striker Ailton has returned to the Bundesliga, to Hamburg, after a stormy 187 days in Istanbul with Besiktas. **Page 60**

MARSEILLE SCANDAL REVIVED

FRANCE: Allegations made by former player Jean-Jacques Eydelie that the 1993 European Cup-winning side were doped have refocused attention on a period that French football wants to forget. **Pages 6 & 44**

SHOVKOVSKYI FACES RACE TO BE FIT

UKRAINE: The national team were dealt a major blow ahead of their first World Cup when first-choice keeper Olexander Shovkovskyi was sidelined for at least three months after breaking his collar bone. **Page 68**

BAD BANNERS

ITALY: Roma were ordered to play on neutral ground after fans displayed neo-Nazi messages and paraphernalia at a home game. **Page 16**

QUESTION OF STANDARDS

EGYPT: There was a marked rise in the quality of football at the African Nations Cup, but there are fears that the continent's World Cup representatives will not be up to scratch in Germany. **Page 14**

BIN HAMMAM BLOWS HOT AND COLD

ASIA: AFC president Mohamed Bin Hammam has confirmed that the 2007 Asian Cup will be staged in four countries – Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia – despite his reservations. **Page 74**

● 11/01/06

Over the border…Monaco president Michel Pastor welcomes new signing Christian Vieri from Milan

● 16/01/06

Shake on it…Steve Staunton and Bobby Robson are unveiled as the Republic of Ireland's new management team

● 20/01/06

Party balloons…the African Nations Cup opening ceremony takes place in Cairo

HEADLINERS

JEAN-JACQUES EYDELIE

Ex-Marseille player reignites 1993 scandal with new doping claims

JEAN-JACQUES EYDELIE'S latest revelations about what he insists was endemic corruption at his club, Marseille, in 1993 have reopened the can of worms that French football thought (and hoped) had been closed for ever.

The former midfielder had previously admitted handing over money to fix a crucial League match between Marseille and Valenciennes towards the end of the 1992-93 campaign to ensure his club won the championship. Marseille were subsequently stripped of the title and relegated to the Second Division.

'Before the Final we lined up to be injected in the buttocks'

Now, in an explosive interview in *L'Equipe's* weekend magazine, Eydelie has made fresh claims, alleging, among other things, that Marseille players were doped before the 1993 Champions Cup Final against Milan, a game Marseille won 1-0.

"Before the Munich Final we were asked to line up in single file to be injected in the buttocks," said Eydelie, whose allegations are to be expanded upon in a forthcoming book. "Rudi Voller refused and had a real go at everyone in his native tongue."

Unsurprisingly, the claim has provoked widely differing reactions in France and Italy. "I don't think Jean-Jacques Eydelie would lie," said midfielder Demetrio Albertini, a member of the losing side. "These aren't rumours any more. Now we've got a player who's talking."

"It's pathetic," said Franck Sauzee, one of Eydelie's team-mates. "I'm not even angry, because for him to have agreed to write this kind of book, he must have sunk really low. This tale of doping is, frankly, both pathetic and grotesque."

Eydelie, of course, is having none of it. "For Marseille's bosses, cheating had become second nature," he claims, illustrating his point by alleging that club officials tampered with the water bottles of the CSKA Moscow team before they lost 6-0 against Marseille earlier in that European Cup campaign.

"Our staff got hold of the Moscow players' water packs," Eydelie alleges. "Grinning in front of us, they used a syringe with a very thin needle to inject them."

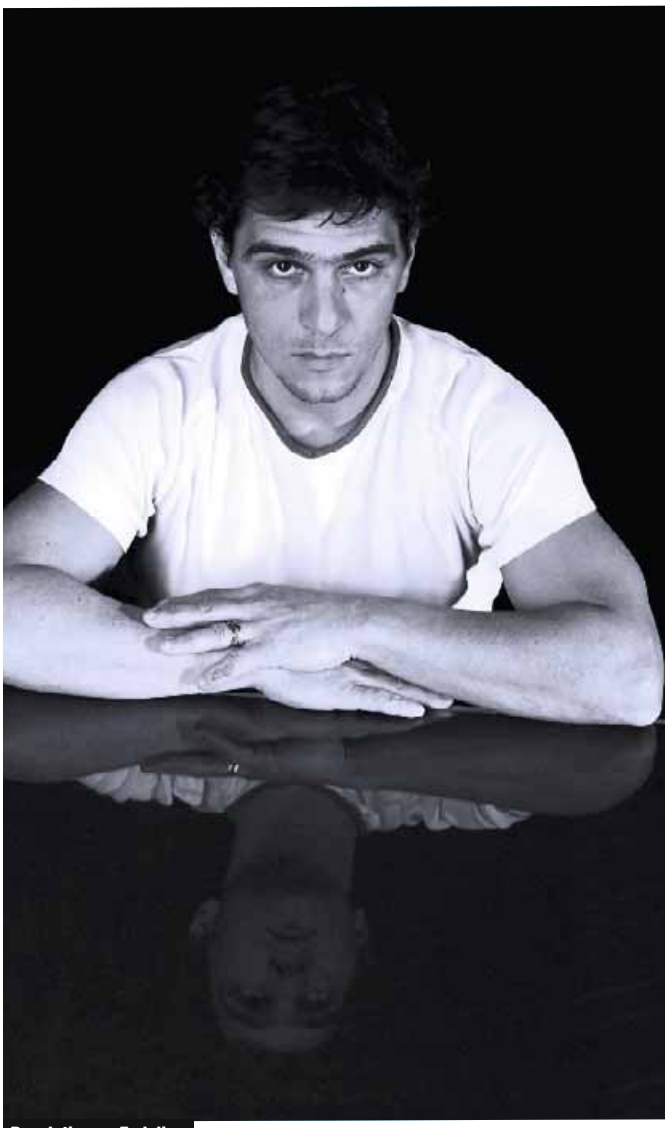
Again, the claims are vigorously denied. "You would have had to be stupid to have acted like that in full view of everybody," said Jean Duby, Marseille's doctor at the time. "Especially when it would have been easier to have hidden it. Everything he's claiming defies logic."

Meanwhile, former Marseille president Bernard Tapie is threatening legal action.

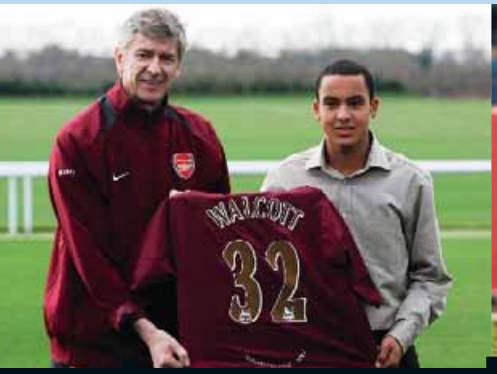
Eydelie also claimed that doping was rife in all the French clubs he represented – with the honourable exception of Bastia – merely heightening the need for the French authorities to steel themselves for further probes into some of the darkest recesses of the game's recent history in the country.

Howard Johnson

● *See also Keir Radnedge, page 44.*



Revelations…Eydelie



● 20/01/06

Teen spirit…Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger hands 16-year-old Theo Walcott his shirt on arrival from Southampton

● 21/01/06

Barring the way…Herita Ilunga holds off Togo's Yao Senaya during DR Congo's 2-0 win at the African Nations Cup

FREDDY ADU

Youngest player to appear for the USA

CUE MORE "Much Adu about Freddy" headlines after the 16-year-old became the youngest player to appear for the senior United States team. Adu made his debut as an 81st-minute substitute in January's 0-0 friendly draw against Canada in San Diego.

The teenager, a regular in the Under-20s line-up, now has an outside chance of being included in the senior squad for the World Cup.

UK media reports continue to link Adu with a move away from MLS club DC United, with Chelsea leading the chase. But his agents have denied that a deal has been struck.

On high…Adu celebrates a goal on Under-20s duty

CARLOS BIANCHI

Argentinian ousted at Atletico Madrid

Bad run…Bianchi

THE ARGENTINIAN became the latest coaching casualty at Atletico Madrid when he was sacked following a disastrous run of form that culminated in a Spanish Cup defeat by Zaragoza.

Striker Fernando Torres was quick to put the boot in to his old boss, who was replaced by Pepe Murcia. "We're a team in harmony now," Torres said. "Bianchi was not able to connect with the players, and while we were OK up front and in defence, there was no midfield at all."

Numbers game

6…

the number of competitive games Turkey must play behind closed doors and on neutral ground as punishment for the brawl following the World Cup play-off against Switzerland in Istanbul last November.

11…

the number of Roma fans who face prosecution for brandishing Nazi symbols during a Serie A game.

£70m…

the amount, a record, spent by Premiership clubs during January's transfer window.

3…

the number of members of the FA panel to decide who succeeds Sven Goran Eriksson as England manager after the World Cup – FA chief executive Brian Barwick, international committee chairman Noel White and Premier League chairman Dave Richards.

2.6m…

the number of World Cup tickets sold, some 84 per cent of the total, according to the organising committee.

£7m…

the income for the Confederation of African Football in 2005, a record.

£50m…

the amount spent on new players by Graeme Souness in his 15 months as Newcastle manager.

● 22/01/06

Winning start…Guinea beat South Africa 2-0 at the African Nations Cup

● 23/01/06

No way through…Nigeria defend a free-kick from Ghana's Matthew Amoah during the Super Eagles' 1-0 win

● 24/01/06

I'm off…Sven Goran Eriksson faces the media following confirmation that he will step down as England manager after the World Cup

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville

…on Pennant's revival at Birmingham… Arsenal's gamble on Walcott…Sven's survival skills… Woodward's unsuitability for the Saints…and the baffling eulogies for Tony Banks

BY COINCIDENCE, I saw Jermaine Pennant running riot for Birmingham City during a crushing 5-0 win over Portsmouth the day after Arsenal announced the signing of 16-year-old Theo Walcott for what may amount to £12million.

Steve Bruce, the Birmingham manager, was hardly exaggerating when he said Pennant was "unplayable" on the day. And when Arsene Wenger, in all frankness, described the costly purchase of Walcott as "a gamble", he could even have been reflecting on the see-saw career of the now 23-year-old Pennant.

For Pennant was even younger than Walcott, a mere 15, when he went to Highbury from Notts County, and even though he cost "only" £2m, it was still a huge amount to pay for one so young. And alas, it did not work.

Pennant turned out to be a youngster with a turbulent lifestyle who would never gain a regular first-team place with the Gunners, though I remember him running the Southampton defence ragged one evening at Highbury and scoring a hat-trick in the 6-1 win. I also recall seeing him excel on the right wing when on loan at Watford, in an FA Cup tie against West Bromwich Albion, showing his speed, swerve and footwork. Arsenal took him back for a time to Highbury, then lent him to Leeds. Thence to Birmingham after a drink-driving offence landed him in jail.

City treated him with patience and tolerance and they seem now to be gaining their reward. He was in glorious form against Portsmouth, superbly quick and elusive, scoring a spectacular goal when he moved into the middle, danced left and then pivoted to score with his right foot. Well might team-mate Emile Heskey generously say afterwards that Pennant deserved to play for England, though of course he won't. The likes of him and Aston Villa's James Milner do not have a prayer as long as dreary Sven Goran Eriksson, the Teflon Swede, remains in charge.

Turbulent lifestyle…Pennant

'When Wenger described the costly purchase of Walcott as a gamble, he could even have been reflecting on the see-saw career of Pennant'

As for Walcott, I think that in many ways the Gunners would have been wise to leave him with Southampton for a while. Perhaps the Saints should console themselves that at least, on this occasion, Arsenal did pay money – and big money – for the boy.

Arsenal, whose hugely expensive academy has produced only one British first-teamer – 18-year-old Kerrea Gilbert – since the emergence of Ashley Cole, have made something of a speciality in spiriting young European talents away from their original clubs without paying a penny. At the age of 16, Cesc Fabregas was prised from unhappy Barcelona for nothing, as was promising Italian striker Arturo Lupoli from Parma, at 17.

The thing about these boy wonders is that you just do not know how they will develop. Wayne Rooney, who cost Manchester United more than double the price of Walcott when he joined them from Everton, has emphatically maintained his promise. Pele was a World Cup star at 17 in 1958. Barcelona have dazzling 18-year-old Lionel Messi; the Argentinian has been with them from the age of 13 and has developed splendidly. But there are all too many tales of prodigies

● 25/01/06

Good to be back…Ailton returns to the Bundesliga, to Hamburg, after an unhappy spell at Besiktas in Turkey

● 28/01/06

Derby delight…Sporting Lisbon's Sa Pinto is mobbed by team-mates after scoring in the 3-1 defeat of Benfica

who, for one reason or another, have fallen by the wayside.

SVEN GORAN ERIKSSON, like the poor, is always with us. For a little while, after the fiasco in Dubai, when The Three Stooges were inexplicably conned by an imposter who had done it before, there did seem a hope we might be rid of him before the World Cup finals.

However, the Football Association, which has treated him so indulgently all along in his disloyalty and his libidinousness, blithered about the presumed need not to rock the boat and has kept him on board as England surge towards the inevitable quarter-finals exit.

Yes, it was a low journalistic trick, but Eriksson, his agent Athole Still and their lawyer, Richard Des Voeux, should surely have seen through it. The *Sunday Telegraph's* Roy Collins made a good point when he wrote that following Eriksson's claims of club corruption, there were two valid alternatives. Either Eriksson knew and failed to tell the FA about it, which was unforgiveable. Or he did tell the FA and it did nothing.

Controversial…Woodward

The *Daily Mail's* Jeff Powell had a good point, too, when he ridiculed Eriksson's insistence that his indiscretions had had no effect on his relations with their targets. What, as Powell said, would Michael Owen, Rio Ferdinand and co say when he phoned them, knowing that their international places still, alas, depended on him?

What greatly surprises me is the seeming agreement that England have a splendid young team with every chance (even with Eriksson in charge) of winning the World Cup. Where has it been hiding?

It lost 4-1 in Denmark, was lucky to survive in Cardiff and went down to ignominious defeat in Belfast. Yes, it did beat Argentina, but only by the skin of its teeth against a team suspect in defence and for whom Juan Roman Riquelme bestrode the field.

'The FA has blithered about the presumed need not to rock the boat and kept Eriksson on board'

IF THAT consortium does manage to buy Rupert Lowe out of Southampton and expedite Clive Woodward with him, it is surely a consummation devoutly to be wished. Ironically, the news that this might happen followed just a day after a cricket correspondent had written a piece praising the grotesquely-overpaid (£750,000 a year) Woodward and his controversial works.

It seemed that even George Burley, a highly competent manager, had been blinded with science. Science? With his retinue of arcane specialists, Woodward is supposedly revolutionising archaic football culture. Yet if this be so, how come that, after his triumph with England in the rugby World Cup, he should have fallen on his face with the Lions in New Zealand, preposterously taking Alastair Campbell along for rather more than the ride?

THEY say never speak ill of the dead. Yet I am baffled by the eulogies following the death of Tony Banks. He was a disastrous Sports Minister whose response to press criticism was a barrage of obscenities. A class warrior who accepted a peerage. And helped Ken Livingstone ruin the GLC. Bewildering.

"Notes" & quotes

"Guus Hiddink and I wish him all the best."

England coach Sven Goran Eriksson is in unusually frank mode when asked by autograph hunters in a Stockholm restaurant who will succeed him.

"After a period of apparent calm, racism has returned to the Italian game. I can't put up with the monkey chants."

Juventus defender Lilian Thuram paints a thoroughly depressing picture of Serie A today.

Outburst…Stephen Keshi

"If I was white maybe he would have more respect for me."

Togo coach Stephen Keshi comments on his fallout with star striker Emmanuel Adebayor at the African Nations Cup.

"I don't understand. Don't we have any football experts here?"

Nurnberg director of sport Martin Bader reacts with incredulity to the news that Germany boss Jurgen Klinsmann would like the national hockey coach, Bernhard Peters, to become the German football federation's new technical director.

"The sun shone for us in the Stadium of Light tonight."

Astronomically-challenged Sporting Lisbon striker Liedson is over the moon after scoring twice in his team's away win at city rivals Benfica.

● 30/01/06

Familiar face…Robbie Fowler rejoins Liverpool from Manchester City in a late transfer swoop by Rafa Benitez

● 30/01/06

Banner headline…Lothar Matthaus takes charge at Atletico Paranaense in Brazil after stepping down as Hungary coach

● 02/02/06

Driven out…Graeme Souness leaves Newcastle's training ground after getting the sack

far&wide

Facing charges…Gaucci

Arresting news for Gaucci

PERUGIA-BASED MAGISTRATES issued arrest warrants for Luciano Gaucci, the former owner of Perugia, Ancona, Catania, Sambenedettese and Viterbese, and his two sons, Alessandro and Riccardo, at the start of February.

Gaucci made plenty of headlines in his time at Perugia, from his signing of Japanese midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata to the sacking of South Korean international Ahn Jung-hwan for putting Italy out of the 2002 World Cup.

Now, he and his sons have been charged with criminal association and fraudulent bankruptcy relating to the collapse of Perugia last November. Gaucci is currently living on the Caribbean island of Santo Domingo, where an international arrest warrant has been sent. The sons, who are both based in Italy, were initially imprisoned then released and placed under house arrest.

The magistrates' investigation has focused on matters such as the sale of Nakata to Roma, Perugia's £14million purchase of an (overvalued?) property belonging to the Gaucci family, the alleged use of the club's pension funds to invest in the other Gaucci-owned clubs, and monies allegedly "borrowed" by the Gaucci family from Perugia and never paid back.

Keane's toilet trouble

It's a good job Roy Keane's contract with Celtic wasn't signed on a pay-as-you-play basis, otherwise the former Manchester United skipper might have been counting his pennies after a recent League game against Dundee United having spent one during it. Keane was about to be introduced as a substitute by manager Gordon Strachan with Celtic 3-1 ahead, but he had apparently responded to a call of nature and could not be located. By the time the Irishman returned from the lavatory, United had launched a comeback, which changed Strachan's substitution plans and meant Keane had to remain on the bench for the remainder of the game.

Caught short…Keane

Women join Saudi crowd

A first from Saudi Arabia, where Swedish women were allowed to watch a friendly between their national side and the host country.

Normally, women are not allowed to mix with men in public places in Saudi Arabia. But following protests from Swedish politicians and diplomats, the local authorities waived the rule.

"We have made an exception for the Swedish women so they can attend the game," said Saudi League director Faisal Abd Al-Hadi before the match, a 1-1 draw. "They will be allowed to watch the game but they will be seated in a separate section in the stadium and not allowed to mingle with the Saudi crowd."

Teenage tears

Football can be a very emotional game. Ask Fiorentina's 19-year-old Bulgarian striker Valeri Bojinov, who was recently caught sobbing outside the Tuscan club's training ground by a TV crew. "I just want to play, to play," he wailed as a

● 03/02/06

Striding out…Ferdinand Coly looms above Guinea's Fode Mansare during Senegal's quarter-final win at the Nations Cup

● 04/02/06

That's it!…Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba celebrates after scoring the winning penalty in the marathon shoot-out against Cameroon in Cairo

Travolta's flight fever

NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN taking place to allow actor John Travolta to fly the plane taking the Australia team to the World Cup finals in Germany.

Travolta, a qualified pilot, is also an "ambassador" of team sponsor Qantas, the Australian national airline, and apparently made the offer after the Socceroos beat Uruguay in last November's qualifying play-off. Travolta, wearing an Australia scarf, was filmed taking part in chaotic dressing-room celebrations after the second leg in Sydney.

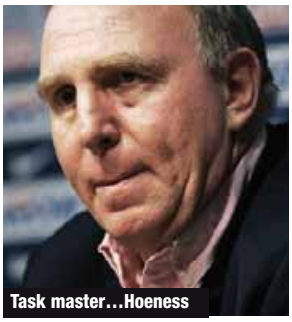
Ready for take-off…Travolta

team-mate tried in vain to console him.

Clearly, recent events had all got too much for the teenager, a £10million signing from Lecce a year ago but who has been used only sparingly this term. Not only had he been demoted to the youth team squad for criticising club president Andrea Della Vale, but he had also been informed that a proposed move to Internazionale had fallen through.

Bojinov need not have worried, though. The following day he was reinstated to the professional ranks. "I want to apologise to my team-mates, the coach, the city, the fans and especially the president," said the youngster. "I made a mistake, I paid for it and hope to come out of this stronger."

With that, he jumped into his Porsche Cayman. Life's not all bad.



Task master…Hoeness

Hoeness sets homework

Hertha Berlin players got a shock during the winter break when their general manager, Dieter Hoeness, aggrieved by the club's Cup defeat against Third Division St Pauli, set them some holiday homework. Their task? To write an essay offering ideas about how the team could improve. Alas, the players' marks have not been disclosed.

Shorts measure from Zizou

Some superstars do have a heart, as one young Real Sociedad fan can confirm. The 14-year-old, a ballboy at the club, made a bet with a friend before a home game against Real Madrid that he would get Zinedine Zidane's shirt as a keepsake at the end of the match. Unfortunately, when he approached Zizou at the final whistle, the Frenchman had already swapped shirts with a Sociedad player. But, sensing the youngster's disappointment, Zidane beckoned him into the tunnel, where he promptly stepped out of his shorts and handed them over instead.

GOOD MONTH FOR...

● **LIVERPOOL FANS…** who have been celebrating the return of "God" to Anfield. Robbie Fowler re-signed after spells at Leeds and Manchester City.

Clear message…Reds fans

● **CHELSEA, LYON, BARCELONA, JUVENTUS, BAYERN MUNICH…** leading from the front – and by some distance – in Europe's Big Five leagues.

● **JOHN OBI MIKEL…** the Nigerian teenager added to his growing reputation with his first senior international goal in the 2-0 win over Zimbabwe at the African Nations Cup.

BAD MONTH FOR...

Poor show…Dumitru

● **GRAHAM RIX…** the Hearts coach admitted he was not picking the team, and that Lithuanian owner Vladimir Romanov was calling the shots instead.

● **NUNO ASSIS…** the Benfica midfielder was suspended after testing positive for the banned steroid norandrosterone following a Portuguese League match.

● **TED DUMITRU…** South Africa's Romanian caretaker coach was fired after overseeing the country's worst-ever performance at an African Nations Cup finals.

● **LARYEA KINGSTON…** the Ghana midfielder is likely to miss the World Cup after being handed a four-match international ban for being sent off for fighting with Senegal defender Habib Beye at the Nations Cup.

● 05/02/06

Happy Camper…Atletico Madrid forward Fernando Torres celebrates scoring in a 3-1 League win at Barcelona

● 05/02/06

One-up…William Gallas puts Chelsea ahead against Liverpool in the Premiership. The defending champions go on to win 2-0

● 07/02/06

Winning way…Amr Zaki gives Egypt victory over Senegal in the African Nations Cup semi-finals

Pearce for England!

The passionate, patriotic manager is the right choice to succeed Sven

WS WORLD SOCCER **Jim Holden**

STRIP AWAY ALL the hype and hypocrisy surrounding the FA's announcement that Sven Goran Eriksson would finish as England manager after the World Cup, and what you had was confirmation of the bleeding obvious.

For many months it had been abundantly clear to those of us privileged to have private conversations with Eriksson that he hankered for a return to the daily routine and intensity of club management.

He was always going to leave after the World Cup, however England fared. Five years in the job had been more than enough, not only because of the loneliness of the international manager but also because of the ceaseless media interest in his private life.

This, of course, culminated in the infamous "fake sheikh" sting, in which a newspaper reporter posed as a wealthy man from Dubai proposing to set up a football academy. Eriksson was well and truly conned, revealing his avarice, naivety and an astonishing carelessness in conversation with total strangers.

But, it has to be said, this entrapment served no noble purpose. It was merely designed for public entertainment and titillation – and how it delivered.

The episode also underlined how uniquely demanding the job of England manager has become. Not only must he win every match but he also has to prove himself a saintly character. It's little wonder some call it the impossible job.

Yet has the undignified demise of Eriksson made others scorn the role? We can give a clear and resounding no. The moment it was officially announced that Sven's time was up, the scramble to succeed him began with all the noise and thrill of the start of a Formula One race.

Guus Hiddink and Luiz Felipe Scolari, who have impeccable credentials as international managers, both hurled themselves into the fray. Domestic contenders like Sam Allardyce, Alan Curbishley and Steve McClaren also made it plain their engines were revving.

My choice, though, would be none of these, but Stuart Pearce. The 43-year-old Manchester City boss initially thought it "ludicrous" that he might be a candidate, but quickly changed his tune when he realised his appointment would be in keeping with a tradition that goes right back to Alf Ramsey.

'He never hides behind fatuous excuses, never lambasts referees, and demands high standards of behaviour'

While many pundits reckon long years of experience in management are essential to be an international boss, a strong counter view is that it doesn't matter at all – that what really counts is youthful vitality, a natural strength of character, a strong football intelligence, and a formidable career as an international player, which gives you instant respect and credibility in the dressing-room.

The history of the game is full of such men. Ramsey was only 42 when appointed to lead England and had just one year of top-flight management to his name. Four years later he was a World Cup winner.

Others who come to mind are Michel Platini, Mark Hughes and Rudi Voller, the latter guiding Germany to the 2002 World Cup Final. At this summer's World Cup there will be Marco Van Basten and Jurgen Klinsmann, who both took charge with no first-team coaching experience at all.

Pearce, who has proved mighty impressive in his first full season at Manchester City, would be a relatively old hand by comparison. What makes him such a compelling choice is a bundle of qualities.

Passion spills from his body when he's on the touchline, a reminder of his intense playing days as a rugged full-back with the nickname Psycho. He inspires fans and players in equal measure.

Yet, as a manager, Pearce has become a model of calm, dignity and thoughtfulness. He never hides behind fatuous excuses, he never takes the easy option of lambasting referees, and he demands high standards of behaviour. He puts many other colleagues to shame.

Pearce is also tactically astute, as the recent comprehensive victory against Manchester United in the Premiership illustrated, and he encourages a progressive style of play, which is essential at international level.

Lastly, and most importantly, he actively wants to do the job. Many aspects of it are unenviable, but the muck-rakers won't find a scrap of dirt on Pearce. He is a strong, sensible, passionate and patriotic Englishman – and by some distance the best choice to succeed Eriksson.

WORLD SOCCER TRAVEL CLUB

THE MILAN DERBY

APRIL 15-17, 2006

The 264th Milan derby takes place on Easter Saturday, April 15. Some 85,000 fans will pack the San Siro stadium to watch one of the biggest matches in world football, and *World Soccer* is proud to offer readers the chance to attend this amazing occasion, in one of Europe's finest cities. Places are limited, so book now!

£399
PER PERSON
Based on 2 people sharing

"The Milan derby is quite simply one of the biggest games on the planet. With little separating the two teams in Serie A, this is sure to be a massive match played in a packed San Siro. There really is nothing quite like it."

Gavin Hamilton – Editor

THE PACKAGE

- Return flights from London Heathrow to Milan
- 2 nights' 3-star accommodation in central Milan
- Category B tickets to Milan v Internazionale
- Tour of the San Siro stadium
- PLUS free Milan city guide and *World Soccer* rucksack

For more information or to book your place, e-mail

worldsoccertravelclub@ipcmedia.com

or call us on

020 7261 7656

6386 ATOL PROTECTED

- Single person supplements are £70
- The trip is available to readers who do not live in the UK at a cost of £320 per person (based on 2 people sharing), excluding flights and airport/hotel transfers in Milan.

Question of standards

The Nations Cup showed how much the African game has improved. But the benefits may be lost if the World Cup representatives fail to come up to scratch in Germany

MARK GLEESON in Cairo

THE DRAMATIC improvement in standards at the African Nations Cup finals in Egypt has come as a major boon to the tournament's image.

While previous Nations Cups have always been full of drama and colour, and loaded with delightful eccentricities, the standard of the football has been markedly average, if not, on occasions, poor. Teams have often been tactically naive, and the games riddled with basic errors and indiscipline. Coupled with sub-standard conditions, both on and off the field, it has been a testing time for all concerned.

But over the past two years, African football has taken on a new air of maturity, and the quality of the team organisation and professionalism in Egypt were markedly better than at previous editions of the continental championship.

The Europe-based professionals have been hugely influential, and countries seem so much better organised, both in their preparations for the event and in the way they approach their matches. The impact of coaches from around the world has also helped Africa to a new level of proficiency.

The innocent charm of the Nations Cup is fast evaporating, much to the good of the African game.

The Egypt event was noticeable for its lack of foibles, eccentric coaches, and players from obscure clubs. Even the usual rows about

Let's go…Ivory Coast skipper Didier Drogba urges his men on in Egypt but coach Henri Michel appeared to be already looking ahead to the World Cup

money were restricted to just a few teams, allowing for the football itself to be the main focus of attention, and the excitement levels grew in tandem.

"I've been very surprised by the quality of the football and the talent in Egypt," said Roger Lemerre, coach of defending champions Tunisia, who lost on penalties to Nigeria in the quarter-finals. "In the three years I've been in Africa the quality and standard of the game has really picked up. For the future, I believe European countries have to really watch out for a new wave of African football."

Lemerre suggested that many African countries' close connections with his native France and the short distance to Europe were behind this improvement. "In the Maghrebian countries the culture of football from France pervades and is very powerful," he said. "Countries like Tunisia owe a lot of their success to the influence of Europe."

Tunisia were noticeably fitter and better organised than two years ago, when they won the Nations Cup on home soil but also had some lucky breaks and were carried along by the enthusiasm of their fans.

Eyes on the weather…Hayatou

Issa Hayatou, president of the Confederation of African Football, has again reiterated his opposition to playing the Nations Cup finals during the European close season, saying wet weather would prevent many African countries hosting the event during those months. "We would not have decent pitches on which to stage the tournament," Hayatou said. "It would be more like water polo than football."

Sound organisation

But they were far from the only team to impress in Egypt. Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo also reached the last eight on the back of sound organisation and a studious approach to the game. Normally, they are countries whose pre-tournament preparations are poor and whose performances are riddled with eccentricity.

"It is so much easier to work with players who have experience in Europe because they understand better the tactical discipline that the modern game needs. It is much easier to get your message across," said Patrice Neveu, the French coach of Guinea, who won their group but lost 3-2 to Senegal in the quarter-finals.

A better quality, more exciting Nations Cup finals is a huge boost for the game in Africa and for the confidence of the continent's sides. It also improves the future marketability of the Nations Cup. (The one downside was the poor crowd control in Egypt, and FIFA warned of the future potential of a stadium tragedy in the country if the continued indiscipline among spectators is not checked.)

'I believe European countries really have to watch out for a new wave of African football'

Tunisia coach Roger Lemerre

It is ironic, then, that the progress made by African football as shown in Egypt could all be eroded if the continent's five representatives fail to come up to scratch at this summer's World Cup finals.

On the evidence of the Nations Cup, Angola and Togo will simply not be up to the task in Germany. Neither made it out of their group in Egypt (both were in Group B), and Togo, who lost all three games, are said to be interviewing candidates to take over from coach Stephen Keshi. Angola looked far too lightweight in midfield and their star striker, Akwa, could not put a foot right.

Although Tunisia's fitness and organisation could not be faulted, they lack attacking edge and strength in depth, and will probably also struggle to make progress in Germany.

The jury is still out on Ghana and the Ivory Coast, who will be Africa's top hopes at the World Cup.

Ghana, who missed out on the quarter-finals on goal difference, were hampered by the absence of key midfielders Michael Essien and Sulley Muntari. But while those two should be back in Germany, the Black Stars have now lost another midfielder, Laryea Kingston. He picked up a four-match ban after being sent off against Senegal, and though he has served one of them, it effectively ends any hopes he had of World Cup participation.

Team without pattern

Ivory Coast changed their team so frequently in the group matches that they played without any discernible pattern. Although they reached the Final (we went to press before the result of the showdown against Egypt was known), the impression was that coach Henri Michel was using the tournament for World Cup preparation rather than to win the Nations Cup as an end in itself.

African football badly needs at least a quarter-finalist in Germany to lay the ground work for the 2010 finals in South Africa.

Senegal's performance in getting to the last eight at the 2002 World Cup was a huge boost for Africa, but if the continent is to get six places from FIFA for the 2010 finals, then one of their sides must do at least as well again.

At the start of the Egypt tournament, FIFA president Sepp Blatter said he personally supported Africa having six representatives in 2010 but that he needed help from the teams to strengthen his argument when the organisation's executive committee indulges in its usual horse trading over World Cup allocation.

But while he might be able to point to a positive Nations Cup as part of his argument, it would be a surprise if he can also point to African success in Germany. And what a pity that would be, if the gains of Egypt are to be forgotten within just six months as Africa fails at World Cup level yet again.

Bad banners

Roma were ordered to play on neutral ground after fans displayed neo-Nazi messages and paraphernalia at a home game

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

AS WE HEAD into March, Italian football has been sprouting many of its familiar feathers, some pretty and some not so. On the field, Juventus continue to dominate, Internazionale are making a valiant attempt to challenge, and Roma are playing just about the best football. Off the field, we have had a combination of Fascist fans, coach sackings and rows about TV rights.

The most negative news of the month came from Rome's Stadio Olimpico, during Roma's 3-0 win against Livorno at the end of January. A small section of right-wing militants, situated in the *Curva Sud,* the traditional focal point for Roma supporters, displayed a banner that read: "Lazio and Livorno, same first initial, same oven." (This had resonances with an incident during a Rome derby in the 1998-99 season, when Lazio fans held up a banner that cheerfully told their Roma counterparts that "Auschwitz is your country, the ovens your homes.")

Also on display were swastikas, neo-Nazi symbols, pictures of Benito Mussolini and another banner reading "*Gott mit uns*" (God with us), the German war motto (this one was actually mis-spelt with the "Gott" having only one "t"). The main banner was 60 feet long but despite its size it was allowed to remain on display for a lengthy period.

Rome Prefect (Chief of Police) Achille Serra later justified the decision not to intervene by observing that to have attempted to remove the banner might well have provoked much more serious disturbances.

Inevitably, the incident prompted the usual media furore. When and how should the police have intervened? What punishment

should be handed down to those responsible? How come a 60ft banner managed to bypass police checks and get into the stadium at all?

Roma attempted to distance themselves from the Ultras in question, saying that they had been "offended by the squalid image of the club offered by what happened". Remarkably, the club then went on to appeal to media and news organisations not to focus on such "violent or political messages", apparently suggesting that the more media attention is given to such fans, the more it encourages them. Which was a bit like saying: Don't vote, it only encourages politicians. In short, the club seemed to have missed the point.

Not everybody did, however. Firstly, the Football League's disciplinary judge ordered Roma to play their next home game at a neutral venue (Rieti) and behind closed doors.

Then UEFA spokesman William Gaillard, speaking at UEFA's Unite Against Racism conference in Barcelona two days after the Roma-Livorno game, was categoric in his condemnation of Italian football's failure to deal with its fan problems. He said: "There's something you've been getting wrong in Italy, and for some time now. It's not possible that Italy is going in the opposite direction to so many other European countries when it comes to dealing with racism."

Gaillard went on to suggest that Italy's fan problems were linked to a lack of awareness in Italian society at large, pointing out that when the European Parliament approved a motion against racism in sport in November 2005, not a single Italian Euro MP had signed the document.

Message of hate… Roma fans taunt city rivals Lazio and opponents Livorno with the main offensive banner

New Milan man…Marcio Amoroso

The most notable departure from Serie A during a quiet transfer window was Christian Vieri, who joined Monaco from Milan. To replace him, Milan signed former Udinese, Parma and Brazil striker Marcio Amoroso from Sao Paulo on an 18-month contract. Juventus, meanwhile, lined up Parma midfielder Marco Marchionni to join them in the summer.

Legislation "a total failure"

Back in Italy, senior police figures expressed their doubts about the directives introduced by Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu last April in the wake of the violence that led to the suspension of the Internazionale-Milan Champions League quarter-final tie.

Talking to Rome daily *La Repubblica,* senior police union representative Nicodemo De Franco commented: "The current legislation is a total failure. The person who produced this legislation did so on the advice of someone who has never been to a football match in his life. Maybe they thought they were dealing with pilgrims at St Peter's and not the Ultras."

The Stadio Olimpico has witnessed several other unsavoury incidents in recent years. Two seasons ago, a Rome derby was suspended because of fan intimidation, while last season Swedish referee Anders Frisk suspended Roma's Champions League tie with Kyiv Dynamo at half-time after being struck by a coin thrown from the crowd as he returned to the dressing-rooms. UEFA awarded the match to Dynamo and ordered Roma to play their remaining two Champions League home games behind closed doors.

The ugly scenes at the Roma-Livorno game did at least have the questionable benefit of taking the attention away from the tedious matter of TV rights. At issue is the question of whether Italian football should revert to a collective bargaining system for Serie A clubs or continue with the current situation in which nearly all the TV deals (satellite, internet, digital terrestrial, mobile phone) are negotiated individually by the clubs with the interested TV, internet or mobile phone parties.

Inevitably, in the absence of collective bargaining, the cake of TV money seems very unevenly divided. This season, Juventus, Milan and Inter have earned £53.8million, £50m and £68.8m respectively from TV rights while Ascoli, Treviso and Siena earned £7.5m, £7.4m and £8.2m.

This situation has led to mutinous noises from a consortium of clubs called Calcio Italia, which comprises Cagliari, Fiorentina, Lecce, Palermo and Sampdoria, some of whom even threatened to falsify the entire championship contest by sending out their youth teams when playing the Big Three. At press time, the question seemed destined for resolution, with League president Adriano Galliani promising to draw up new criteria for the division of the TV "booty", and Calcio Italia receiving a £70m offer from Telecom Italia.

Juventus Cup exit

As for the football, Juventus have continued to sweep aside all that stands in their path in the League, with only Inter able to (just about) stay the pace. The Old Lady did, however, suffer a setback when eliminated from the Italian Cup by Roma in the quarter-finals. That result owed much to the fact that Juventus clearly see the competition as a very distant No 3 on their list of seasonal priorities behind the Champions League and Serie A. As a consequence, they fielded a number of reserves in the first, home leg, which they lost 3-2. They won the return 1-0 to go out on away goals.

But take nothing away from Roma, who are currently playing perhaps the most attractive football in Serie A. The team's splendid

'Maybe they thought they were dealing with pilgrims and not Ultras'

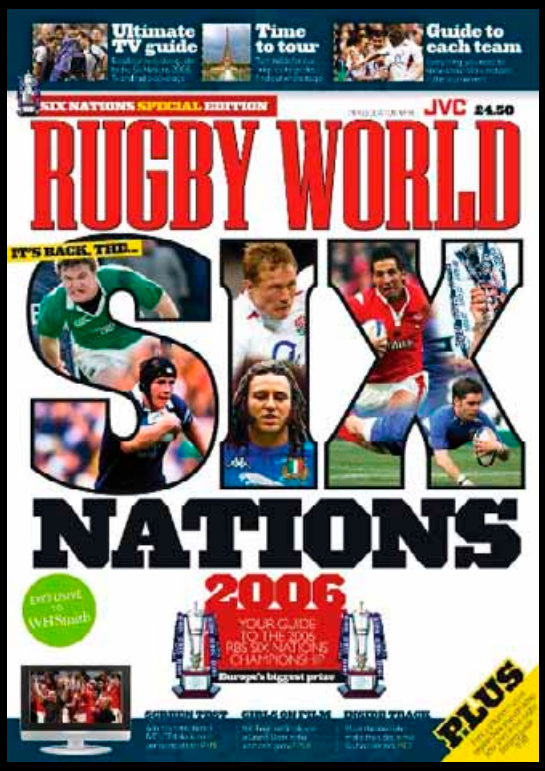
Police union rep Nicodemo De Franco slams the new anti-violence laws

from the makers of Rugby World Magazine...

Six teams

Fifteen games

One winner...



THE SIX NATIONS IS BACK!

...and to celebrate the titanic battle for Europe's biggest prize, Rugby World is publishing a sensational, special extra issue, only on sale at WHSmith from Thursday 19 January

Order your copy from any WHSmith branch

Question of priorities…Lilian Thuram of Juventus closes in on Francesco Totti during the 3-2 Italian Cup quarter-final defeat by Roma at Delle Alpi

form owes much to a harmonious dressing-room (Antonio "thorn-in-the-side" Cassano having been sold to Real Madrid) and to the recovery from injury of key players such as defenders Mancini and Cristian Chivu.

Curiously, too, Roma coach Luciano Spalletti has made a virtue of necessity by playing almost without strikers. With Cassano gone and Vincenzo Montella and DR Congo's Shabani Nonda out injured, Spalletti was left with only captain Francesco Totti to play up front. But he has done so well as a lone striker, ably assisted by Mancini, Simone Perrotta and Damiano Tommasi, that a fourth-place, Champions League finish is far from impossible.

Milan also crashed out of the Italian Cup, beaten 3-1 on aggregate by Palermo, compounding a run of indifferent form in the League (defeat by Roma and draws against Sampdoria and Lazio) that has meant kissing goodbye to any chance of challenging Juventus for the title. Palermo had lost the first leg 1-0 in Milan and then slumped to one of their worst defeats of the season, 3-1 at home to lowly Siena. That was Palermo's fifth loss in seven League games and prompted owner Maurizio Zamparini to sack coach Gigi Del Neri. His replacement, former Lazio boss Giuseppe Papadopulo, made an instant impact, overseeing Palermo's 3-0 win in the return against Milan.

This season's list of fired bosses was already pretty lengthy before Del Neri's dismissal. Cagliari, for example, are now on their fourth, Nedo Sonetti, having dispensed with Attilio Tesser, Daniele Arrigoni and Davide Ballardini. Lecce are on their third, Roberto Rizzo, who was preceded by Angelo Gregucci and Silvio Baldini. Other sackings have included those at Empoli, who replaced Mario Somma with Gigi Cagni, and Treviso, who swapped Ezio Rossi for Alberto Cavasin.

No parting of the ways made as little sense as that between Livorno and former Milan player Roberto Donadoni, who offered his resignation in early February after he had been criticised by club owner Aldo Spinelli on TV. Most neutrals believed Donadoni had worked a miracle with Livorno, who were sixth in Serie A, much higher than expected given their limited squad strength.

World Cup 2006

World Cup Tickets
All 1st Round Matches
Quarter/Semi Finals
No Expensive Packages
Prices starting from $200 USD

Ticketcity.com specializes in all Major sport events worldwide. We're the largest and most trusted premium ticket agency in the world with over 15 years of experience

Purchase Tickets online for the matches that you want to see only...beginning December 9th, view our extensive inventory of tickets to all matches

To Order: 1) Visit us online www.Ticketcity.com
2) Call from UK: 0800 781 0819
3) US Number: +1 512 472 5797

WWW.TICKETCITY.COM

Money man…Beitar Jerusalem owner Arkady Gaidamak stands in front of his luxurious house in Herzliya Pituach, just north of Tel Aviv

Change in fortunes?

Big-money investment in clubs and national team developments suggest Israeli football is on the up

ORI LEWIS
in Tel Aviv

THE YEAR AHEAD could prove to be a turning point for Israeli football, with developments at domestic and international level raising hopes of a brighter future for the game in the "European enclave" on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The national team, with their maturing, hard-to-beat squad and successful new coach, look to have the potential to finally reach a major finals for the first time in more than 30 years. Meanwhile, the club scene is seeing a sudden influx of big money, as foreign businessmen identify the Israeli game as being ripe for investment.

As in many other nations, football is the most popular sport in Israel, but local fans have not had much to celebrate at international level. The national side have failed to qualify for a major finals since entering the UEFA fold in the early 1990s, and their last major tournament appearance was at the 1970 World Cup, the only time they have qualified for the game's biggest event. Nor has there been much continental club glory, the best efforts coming from Maccabi Haifa when reaching the group stages of the 2002-03 UEFA Champions League and recording memorable victories over Manchester United and Olympiakos, and Hapoel Tel Aviv reaching the UEFA Cup quarter-finals in 2002.

However, the feeling is that a change in fortunes is just around the corner. The national team finished third behind France and Switzerland in their World Cup qualifying group but were unbeaten and missed out on a play-off spot only on goal difference. That was under easy-going coach Avraham Grant, who was criticised for his cautious tactics. The theory is that his successor, Dror Kashtan, set to take the reins in June, has the ability and disciplinarian edge to drive Israel a stage further.

Kashtan, currently in charge of Hapoel Tel Aviv and renowned for his teams' counter-attacking style, is the most successful club coach in the country, having won six League titles with four different clubs and five national cups. And the squad he will inherit as national team boss is shaping into a mature and battle-hardened unit that does not fear any opposition.

Players such as midfielder Yossi Benayoun, striker Yaniv Katan, goalkeeper Nir Davidovich and central defender Arik Benado – on course to become Israel's first 100-cap player – form an excellent foundation for Kashtan to build on.

Major impact

As for the domestic game, the emergence of Russia-born billionaire Arkady Gaidamak looks as if it will make a major impact.

Despite his huge wealth, Gaidamak was little known in Israel until last summer when he suddenly snapped up cash-strapped basketball club Hapoel Jerusalem, the perennial bridesmaids to European champions Maccabi Tel Aviv.

Gaidamak, who appears to revel in the media spotlight, soon realised that he would get much more exposure in soccer and within a few weeks had rescued struggling Beitar Jerusalem, whom he has vowed to turn into a major force on the European stage.

The owner has brought in former Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Fernandez and agreed to stump up a reported £700,000 per season in wages for Lens midfielder Jerome Leroy, making him the most expensive player ever in Israeli football.

Other foreign tycoons are following Gaidamak's lead in investing in Israeli clubs. Russian diamond magnate Lev Leviev, a close friend and confidant of Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, has bought a 75 per cent stake in Hapoel Tel Aviv, while German businessman Daniel Jammer is set to take over Maccabi Netanya.

Yet big investment does not guarantee footballing success and any newly-moneyed club must still contend with Maccabi Haifa, the runaway leaders this season and winners of four of the past five championships, whose formula for success has been based on a much less costly outlay than that seen at Beitar. Yaakov Shahar, Haifa's astute, down-to-earth president and one of Israel's richest men, has built up the club through a gradual injection of cash, and after many years of trial and error, it now runs as smoothly as the Volvo cars his business imports into Israel.

'Gaidamak has vowed to turn Beitar into a major force in Europe'

Controversial figure…Gaidamak

Arkady Gaidamak, a Russian Jew, emigrated from the Soviet Union to France in the 1970s on an Israeli exit permit given grudgingly by the communist regime. He eventually made his way back to Russia, where he gradually amassed his fortune through diamonds and arms deals in Africa and Latin America.

The 53-year-old is a controversial figure and has been under investigation by French police on suspicion of money-laundering offences. Israeli police have also questioned him about similar alleged offences, but so far he has not been charged with anything and has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

But even a long-term commitment is no guarantee of success, as Lonnie Hercikowicz has found at Maccabi Tel Aviv. The software and high-tech equipment magnate has been chairman for almost a decade and recently bought several star players – dubbed galacticos by the media. However, the new arrivals appear unlikely to erase the team's reputation as underachievers. Tel Aviv have won the title just once during Hercikowicz's tenure, in 2003, and that was only on goal difference from Maccabi Haifa.

Maccabi Tel Aviv were already out of the running for this season's championship even before the halfway stage, hampered by the lack of chemistry between the star players – who include internationals Eyal Berkovic, Giovanni Rosso and Avi Nimni – and poor relations between coaching staff and management.

Hercikowicz appears powerless to prevent unrest in the dressing-room and just before Christmas bowed to pressure from fans by hiring Dutch coach Ton Kaanen to replace Nir Klinger. Kaanen had been an adviser of Gaidamak at Beitar before falling out with the club as Fernandez took the coaching reins.

While the open-wallet policy of Gaidamak and his ilk could potentially be a positive for Israeli football, it has not been welcomed by the smaller clubs, who fear they will not be able to compete in the transfer market. They are also concerned that if Gaidamak and the other new foreign investors were to become disillusioned and pull the plug on their funding, domestic football could collapse like a house of cards.

But assuming that these new tycoons understand investment in football is a marathon rather than a sprint, there is hope of major improvement in the quality of Israeli soccer.

Cash from Qatar

One club has benefited from foreign investment of another kind. Bnei Sakhnin are one of the poorest outfits in the top division, which they reached in 2003, and the only Arab club. They made a dreadful start to the current League campaign but have picked up since moving into their new stadium, in the picturesque, verdant Galilee hills. The ground was completed after oil-rich Gulf state Qatar donated £6million to the city of Sakhnin.

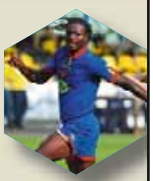
The club became the first Arab side to play in a European club competition when entering the 2004-05 UEFA Cup after a historic victory over Hapoel Haifa in the State Cup Final.

That win was seen as a turning point for Israeli Arabs, who complain of discrimination and say the government fails to give the same funding to their towns, schools and other infrastructure as it does to the Jewish majority.

Sakhnin and their inspirational captain Abbas Suan are a source of pride for the entire Israeli Arab population, who see the club and Arab players in other teams as one of the few ways in which they can stand as equals in the state where they make up about 20 per cent of the 6.9 million population.

Over the page: club guide and who's who in the Israeli game

CLUB GUIDE



1 MACCABI HAIFA
The bigger of the two clubs from the picturesque northern port city (Hapoel Haifa play in the Second Division) and the most successful Israeli club of the past 15 years. Old boys include Eyal Berkovic, Haim Revivo, Yossi Benayoun and Yakubu Aiyegbeni.

2 UPPER NAZARETH
Based in the Jewish new town of the same name, which stands on a hill overlooking the old Nazareth. The young side, promoted three seasons ago, play some of the League's most attractive football.

3 BNEI SAKHNIN
The flagship side of Israel's Arab minority are now in their third season in the Premier League.

4 MACCABI NETANYA
Champions five times in the 1970s and 1980s, but went into a decline after winning the last of those, in 1983. Netanya are another club set to fall into the hands of a wealthy foreign investor – German businessman Daniel Jammer.

5 HAPOEL KFAR SABA
Small yo-yo club from the Sharon region north of Tel Aviv. They were promoted last season but look almost certain to go straight back down.

6 HAPOEL PETACH TIKVA
The bigger of the two clubs in Petach Tikva, a town close to Tel Aviv and part of Israel's urban metropolis. Hapoel are in decline despite a recent injection of private cash.

7 MACCABI PETACH TIKVA
The long-time poor relations of city rivals Hapoel have become a success story after the investment of the Luzon family. Finished second in the League last season and reached the UEFA Cup group stage this term.

8 MACCABI TEL AVIV
The most venerable club in Israeli football – they celebrate their centenary in 2006 – but they have long had a reputation as underachievers.

9 HAPOEL TEL AVIV
Have been more successful than city rivals Maccabi, and their traditionally strong support and steady form have made them prime candidates for a buyout by a foreign investor. Russian Lev Leviev has obliged.

10 BNEI YEHUDA
The small club from Tel Aviv's Hatikva quarter, one of the city's poorest neighbourhoods, have a fanatical following but lack resources.

11 MS ASHDOD
Mid-table outfit who came into being in 1999 after the merger of the industrial port city's two main rivals, Hapoel and Maccabi.

12 BEITAR JERUSALEM
Traditionally seen as a bastion of the right wing (though only a small minority hold extreme right-wing views) and the club have never had an Arab player on their books. Their demanding fans are regular winners of the "unsporting behaviour" prize. New owner Arkady Gaidamak has said he will spend and spend until he makes Beitar a European powerhouse.

THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS IN ISRAELI SOCCER

WHO'S WHO

● **Yaakov Shahar**, president of Maccabi Haifa, was the first man to pump big private money into Israeli soccer and has made Haifa the most successful League club over the past two decades.

● **Izhak (Iche) Menahem**, the FA chairman, is a member of the old guard, an affable man who has nevertheless come in for criticism for being indecisive.

● **Avi Luzon**, the boisterous chairman of Maccabi Petach Tikva, is Menahem's deputy and likely successor in 2007.

● Player agent **Pini Zahavi** has been behind most of the moves of Israeli players abroad. He also owns TV soccer rights in Israel with business partner Eli Azur.

● Russia-born billionaire **Arkady Gaidamak** bought Beitar Jerusalem last summer and vowed to spend big to make the club a European powerhouse.

● **Lonnie Hercikowicz**, the intellectual chairman of Maccabi Tel Aviv, has experienced much disappointment at the helm of Israel's most venerable club, who celebrate their centenary this year.

● **Dror Kashtan**, the quiet disciplinarian coach of Hapoel Tel Aviv, takes over as national team boss this summer, succeeding **Avraham Grant**, who quit in November. Kashtan will work closely with Maccabi Tel Aviv midfielder **Avi Nimni**, the national team captain and an iconic figure in the Israeli game, and West Ham's **Yossi Benayoun**, Israel's most talented player.

● Defensive midfielder **Abbas Suan** is Bnei Sakhnin's leading player and a cult hero among the Arab minority.

● Highly promising FIFA referee **Alon Yefet** became the first Israeli to officiate in the UEFA Champions League earlier this season.

● **Aviad Pohoriless** and **Eyal Levy**, the leading columnists on daily newspaper *Maariv*, get to the heart of Israeli soccer with incisiveness and wit.

● **Moddy Bar On**, a presenter on Channel 5, Israel's sports channel, is eloquent, quick on the draw and has a lighthearted style.

● Print journalist and broadcaster **Avi Meller** has won great respect for his deep knowledge of international soccer.

Alon Yefet

Dror Kashtan

Avraham Grant

Yossi Benayoun

Avi Nimni (left)

Crisis? What crisis?

IT HAD TO HAPPEN eventually, but the timing was cruel, and so too were the circumstances. Barcelona, the runaway League leaders, have lost at last. Not once, but twice – and in the space of just 10 days. All of a sudden, they are not an unbeatable machine, all of a sudden everything's not a foregone conclusion. And their poor showing in those defeats has raised significant worries ahead of the Champions League second round meeting with Chelsea.

Barcelona's run of 18 consecutive victories in all competitions, which stretched back to October, came to an end in the quarter-final, first leg of the Spanish Cup. They conceded three goals in four minutes to go down 4-2 at Real Zaragoza. Then, as if a first defeat in 25 matches was not hard enough to swallow, they were unable to turn the tie round in the second leg. They did win, but only 2-1, and had Ronaldinho harshly sent off.

Barca thus missed out on a semi-final against Real Madrid, which would have brought in an estimated £4.8million in ticket and TV revenue over the two legs, while Ronaldinho was suspended for Barca's vital League visit to second-placed Valencia.

Four days after the second Zaragoza game, Barca lost 3-1 at home to Atletico Madrid – their first League defeat in half a season – when a win would have meant they equalled Real Madrid's record of 15 consecutive League victories, set in 1960-61.

Barca's run had given them a 12-point lead at the top of the table (13 over Real Madrid) and included such a comprehensive defeat of Real in Madrid that the Bernabeu crowd gave them a standing ovation. Barca had also scored 35 goals during the sequence and conceded just six.

And yet here they were conceding half that total in a single match. Fernando Torres scored twice and Maxi Rodriguez got the other as Barcelona were deservedly beaten by an improving Atletico, for whom it was a third consecutive victory since the departure of coach Carlos Bianchi.

There was something inevitable about it, that Barcelona would blow their chance to equal the record in the most painful way and against Atletico, their undisputed bogey team. Atletico had also inflicted Barca's only other League defeat of the season, in September, were the last team to beat them at Camp Nou, 363 days before, and have now won more times at Barcelona in the League than any other side.

Torres has never scored against Real Madrid let alone won, but has scored seven times and lost just once in eight games against Barca, who reportedly want to sign him.

Bad days at the office…Gabri had a poor game against Atletico, while Ronaldinho (main picture) looks suitably disconsolate during the home game against Zaragoza

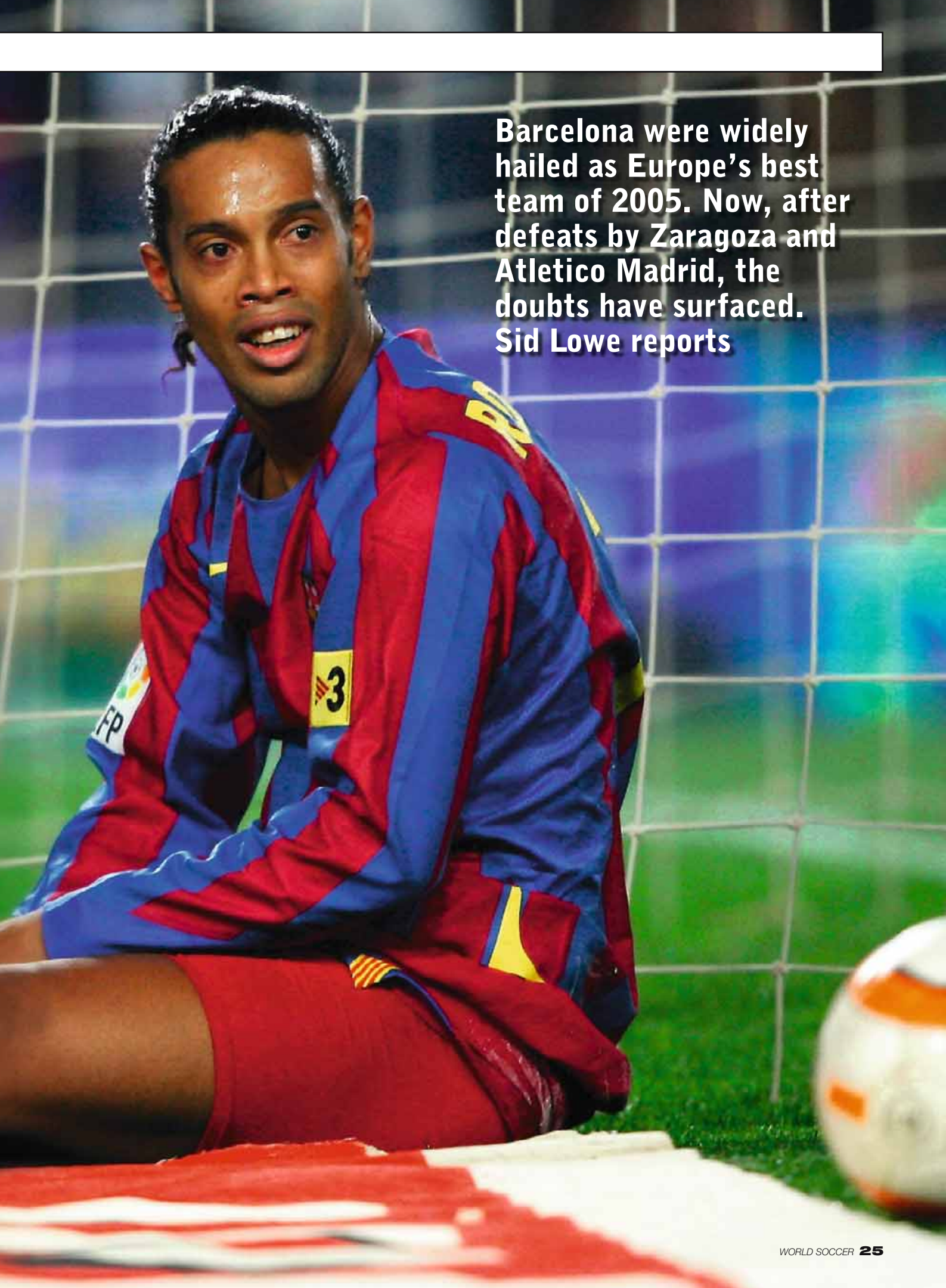
> 'Barca have been harmed, defeat opening old wounds and a few new ones, too'

Barcelona have certainly been harmed, defeat opening old wounds and a few new ones, too. Coach Frank Rijkaard has come under attack from the press and even, if more cautiously, from Johan Cruyff. Ridiculous, really. Not long ago, there was panic at the suggestion that Rijkaard, the quiet man behind Barcelona's title win last season, their first in six years, might leave for Milan. Besides, three defeats in all competitions all season is hardly a crisis, Barca still have a sizeable lead in the League (nine points over Valencia after 22 rounds), and Atletico always beat them. So what?

Well, there appears to be more to it than that, that the two recent defeats were more than just isolated stumbles. Had Barcelona been unlucky against Atletico and Zaragoza it might have been different, but frankly they weren't. They deserved to lose. Defenders Gabri and Oleguer were disastrous and the team as a whole were plodding and unimaginative.

There was a sense that defeat was coming, too, not just because the visitors were Atletico but also because, in truth, Barca's sparkling form has disappeared since the turn of the year, even if the results had continued to roll in.

The team's vulnerability to pace and inability to break down Atletico's tight, organised defence – as, indeed, was the case against Zaragoza – are worrying signs in the run-up to the Chelsea games. After all, those weaknesses were apparent last season when they lost to the English champions-in-waiting 5-4 on aggregate, also in the Champions League second round. Barca may have had more possession and produced more quality football, but they were too easily hit on the break.



Barcelona were widely hailed as Europe's best team of 2005. Now, after defeats by Zaragoza and Atletico Madrid, the doubts have surfaced. Sid Lowe reports

More worrying still is the fact that, for all their wonderful exchanges, immense talent and utter domination of possession, Barcelona lack a Plan B, scoring too few goals from set-pieces and lacking width and height. Much of the time, their football is so good that these failings do not matter; against Chelsea, against Jose Mourinho, the fear is that it will matter rather more. Certainly, there will be no second chances.

Other questions have been raised, too, such as why captain Carles Puyol, who had played every single minute of the season, was rested in Zaragoza, why Deco was wasted on the left against Atletico, and why Gabri started in the latter game when he had been on the verge of joining West Ham.

Gratuitous criticism

Yet much of the criticism was as gratuitous and opportunistic as the answers were straightforward. Puyol had been rested precisely because he'd played every minute until then, and no one seemed to think it was an especially bad idea until after the match. Gabri played because Barca had no other right-back fit and, besides, what difference does it make if he nearly left? (What's surely more important is that he's just not good enough.)

But Deco's bizarre position was harder to defend, especially with Ludovic Giuly and Santi Ezquerro on the bench.

"Why did Barcelona suffer so much in the absence of their stars?" asked one columnist. It was a staggeringly stupid question. Against Atletico, Barcelona didn't so much have the odd star missing as the whole spine of the side – Ronaldinho and Samuel Eto'o were both absent because of suspension and African Nations Cup duty respectively, so too the injured Xavi, while Leo Messi, the one really creative talent left on the field, had to depart at half-time with a pulled muscle. Edmilson, Thiago Motta and Belletti were all absent as well.

Xavi, out since November with a knee ligament injury, is the man Mourinho rates as Barcelona's best player. Eto'o and Ronaldinho have scored 29 League goals between them, the former having hit 18 in as many games, the latter named the FIFA World Player, *Ballon d'Or* winner and *World Soccer's* Player of the Year for 2005. Eighteen-year-old Messi has shown signs of being a true successor to Maradona after a long string of false pretenders to his crown. The surprise is not that Barca missed them but that they didn't miss them more.

Eto'o's absence would supposedly give the distant championship challengers a chance of catching up but Barca dropped only three points during that time.

For all the criticism, you'd think Barcelona were a disaster, not a side that had won 14 League games on the bounce. And yet there are some worrying signs, plus a titan on the horizon. Lose to Chelsea and it won't be quite so easy to dismiss it all with a cheery: "Crisis, what crisis?"

BARCA'S KEY MEN

Frank Rijkaard
Dutch coach who was the surprise choice to take charge at Camp Nou in the summer of 2003. But his calm approach silenced the critics and he delivered Barcelona's first title in six years last season. Has been linked with a summer move to Milan, where he enjoyed such success as a player, if Barcelona win the Champions League this season.

Deco
Brazil-born Portugal midfielder who was a crucial figure in Barcelona's 2004-05 title success, playing a deeper, more defensive role than at FC Porto.

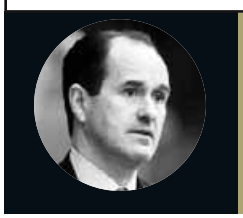
Ronaldinho
The best player in the world at the moment – by some distance. Rejected Manchester United in favour of Barca when he left Paris Saint-Germain in 2003 and has played a pivotal role in the club's revival.

Xavi
Midfield pivot who is likely to miss the rest of the season with damaged knee ligaments. Faces a race to be fit in time for the World Cup.

Samuel Eto'o
Reigning African Footballer of the Year. He moved to Spain from Cameroon as a teenager, joining Real Madrid, but found limited opportunities at the Bernabeu.

Lionel Messi
Argentinian teenager who has been the revelation of the season in Spain. Has started more games this term than last, but has also had a devastating impact when used as a late substitute.

TALKING TACTICS



George Graham

The Sky Sports pundit and former manager of Arsenal, Leeds and Tottenham kicks off a new column

CHELSEA v BARCELONA

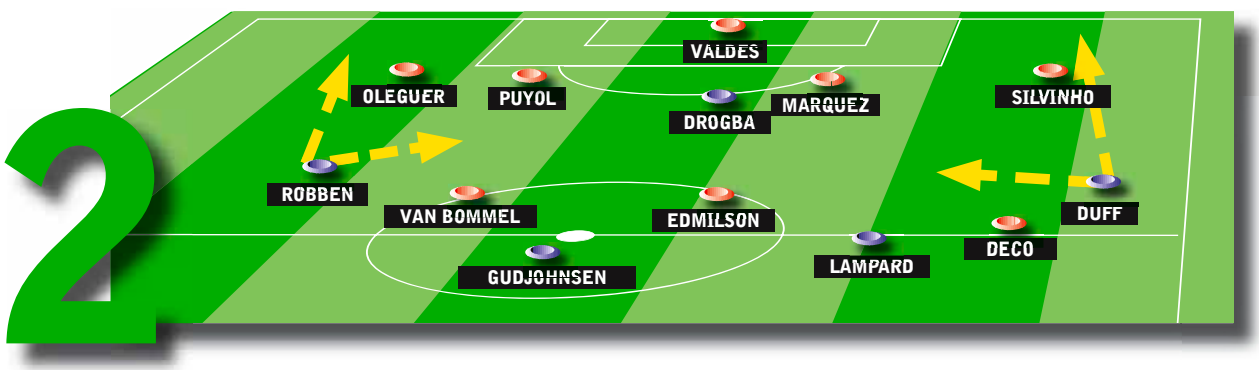
February 22 at Stamford Bridge / March 7 at Camp Nou

Chelsea defence in Barcelona

In the absence of the suspended Michael Essien, Maniche is expected to drop deep to help Claude Makelele close down the threat of Ronaldinho in the channels

Chelsea attack at Stamford Bridge

Chelsea might get even more value from wingers Damien Duff and Arjen Robben if they came inside more and utilised the space between defence and midfield



IT SHOULD BE a great tie, remembering their games last season and bearing in mind the qualities on both sides. But I think Chelsea can do it.

There's a lot to admire in Chelsea even if Jose Mourinho thinks they do not get the credit they deserve. For one thing, they have great balance throughout the team. That is the most important facet of their game.

Starting at the back: Petr Cech is one of the best goalkeepers in the world and can be at the top for the next decade, which is incredible.

Same with the back four. In Ricardo Carvalho and John Terry they have two good defensive centre-halves. There is so much talk nowadays about central defenders being comfortable on the ball and bringing it out of defence and so on, but the Chelsea guys really enjoy defending – which is 75 per cent of the job.

Point to prove… Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho

> **'Chelsea's next progression should be to get more offensive full-backs'**

One point I notice about the full-backs is that they are not allowed to be very attack-minded. For me that is the next progression Chelsea need to make – to get more offensive full-backs. At the moment that attacking third of the pitch seems to be a no-go area for them.

In midfield Chelsea are as good as anyone in the world. Claude Makelele is a great holding player, what I call a sniffer – he sniffs out danger in an arc in front of the two centre-backs. Anyone who wants to attack Chelsea's defence through the centre must get through Makelele first.

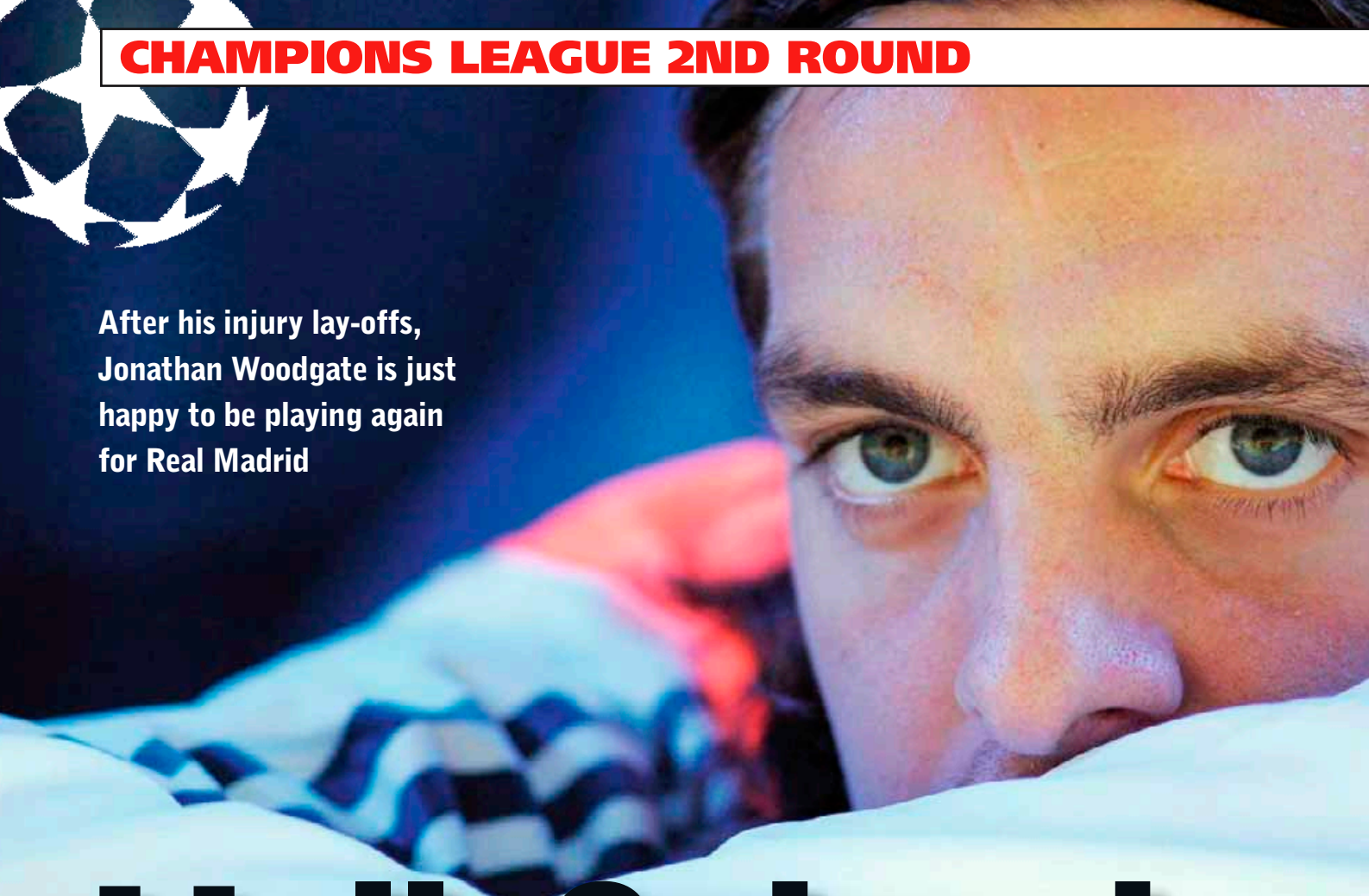
But where I think Chelsea might just vary things when they go to Barcelona is pulling another player back alongside Makelele (Graphic 1) so they have two players protecting the defence – one of them doing the usual job and the other available to pick up Ronaldinho. Since Michael Essien will be suspended maybe Maniche could do the job.

Barcelona have got huge talent but I doubt they have come up against defences anywhere near as good or as well-organised as Chelsea this season, either in the Spanish League or in the Champions League.

More from Duff

One area in which Chelsea could get more out of their attack is if the wingers were encouraged to come inside more often (Graphic 2). They have great pace, but I think Damien Duff, for example, could get more goals, even though he does work really hard.

He scored some great goals for Blackburn, and if Chelsea can achieve more goals from the wings – rather than relying on Didier Drogba up front and Frank Lampard coming through from midfield – they might add a crucial extra edge to their attacking play.



After his injury lay-offs, Jonathan Woodgate is just happy to be playing again for Real Madrid

Hell & back

You were out for over a year, came back, played four games in 10 days and suffered another muscle tear. Now that you've made another comeback, Real Madrid are treading very carefully…
Having been out for so long, it's difficult to come back and play three games a week, so for now we have to be cautious. If I played on Saturday, I could play Wednesday no problem, but maybe not the following Saturday as well. Not yet.

● You're very chirpy, considering everything you've been through.
It was hard, proper hard, but I'm happy just to be playing football. Why not smile? A smile is the best thing in the world.

● You've admitted that when you were injured, you used to get in the car and drive aimlessly around Madrid, getting lost, finding out about the city. What did you discover?
I discovered that people drive like absolute nutters! Oh, my God! I could have crashed over here about 30 times. They are unbelievable. They go through red lights, they are all over the place, they drive fast, beep their horn. It's incredible.

● Your return isn't the only good news. Real Madrid have recovered, too, under your new coach. What's the biggest difference between Juan Ramon Lopez Caro and Vanderlei Luxemburgo?
More training, simple as that. Without a shadow of a doubt. We train hard now. I'm not saying we didn't train hard before with Luxemburgo but we work our bollocks off now. You play on a Sunday and we've got double sessions a day later. The players respect hard work. It's a part of your job, any job. If you don't do your job, you get your wrist slapped, or a final warning, a letter even. We don't get letters, but it's the same thing. Besides, you listen to someone if they're trying to improve you.

● How has Lopez Caro gone about changing things defensively?
He's more thorough in his preparation. In England you have to push the defensive line up all the time, and I like defending further up the field, which is what we're doing now. If you play deep, you make the midfielders' job much harder. There is the risk of the ball over the top, but I've always defended like this and I think it's the best way. The biggest success of the manager is that we're playing together much more as a team.

● What's the communication like for you, being a foreigner? What are team talks like?
Normal; he speaks to us as a group. Mostly, I understand it, but if there is anything I don't understand I speak to Michel Salgado, who speaks good English, and he explains things to me.

● And on the pitch?
Fine. You learn football-speak very quickly. The words you really need get picked up very quickly. Language is about having to do it. If you train every day, you hear the same words every day and they seep into your mind.

● Off the pitch, you've impressed people with your linguistic progress, too.
I try. I can speak better Spanish privately, but it is hard in front of all the cameras. I'm not the best at talking to people anyway – even in English – if there are cameras there, but you have to give it a go, and people respect you for making the effort. I know all the medical lingo because I'm very close to the medical staff.

● The other thing you have had to adapt to is Spanish football, which is very different. You watch kids on a playground here and

none of them heads the ball or tackles, for instance.
We used to play with a tennis ball on concrete and we used to tackle. I remember my mam bought me an England tracksuit, my best tracksuit, and I ripped it up doing a slide tackle in the playground. I was gutted. Nightmare. If you're a defender you have to tackle – it's part of the game. I love to defend. If the ball is there to be won, I'll go and win it.

● But does that different culture cause problems? Are referees in Spain – is football itself – too strict? Your former defensive team-mate Walter Samuel complained that he couldn't even try to tackle here.
I do understand Walter's comments. In England, referees are much more lenient than they are in Spain. It is harder to tackle people here, but that's just the way it is. I came to this country to learn a different style, and that can only benefit me in the long run, if I ever play for England again. If you play against continental teams, you know what they are going to be like. For example, strikers here tend to be nippier and more technical, too. In England they are stronger, more powerful than in Spain.

● Your record of yellow cards in England was very good, whereas here in Spain…
Ha! Well, I've had three yellows and one red already. But it's not as bad as Sergio Ramos's record – he's got three reds. So I don't think you can say it's about adjusting or different styles.

● You still watch English television and you've said that you still drive over to Barajas airport to pick up the English papers.
Every Sunday.

● So you know about Arsenal, your next opponents in the Champions League. What's going wrong with them?
I don't know. They are going through a sticky patch, but they're still a fantastic side with a brilliant manager. I'm sure they'll come out the other side.

● How much do they miss Patrick Vieira?
Any team would miss Vieira. If you took Lampard away from Chelsea, they'd miss him. I think Arsenal have shown that they miss him. It's the presence they miss. Even if he doesn't play well every game, he's still there, he's still in the middle of their midfield, looking over the game, bossing them about. You need that kind of player.

● You're going to be up against Thierry Henry. How do you mark a forward like him?
I can't tell you now because he'll read it! Seriously, though, don't get too tight. Then, when he gets the ball, get in really close. You can't go too far up the pitch because he's so fast that the ball over the top will kill you, and you can't be so tight that he can turn you. You have to be two or three yards off him and then, as he gets the ball, bam! If he turns, you're destroyed. It's all about timing. He's a fantastic player and you have to be on your game to stop him. He's a gentleman, too.

'After so long out all games are big to me, but Arsenal is something special'

● You must be looking forward to the match.
Oh, I can't wait. The Champions League against Arsenal. Big game. Massive game. After so long out, all games are big for me, but this one is something special.

● Finally, England. How would you describe your international career so far?
There hasn't been one. There have only been six games and I haven't played at a tournament.

● Do you still have hopes of making the squad for the World Cup?
Yes. If I play to my potential. It's never too late. We all want to play in the World Cup, but if I don't go, I don't go – I'll be fit and that's the main thing.

Interview by Sid Lowe

IT'S A KNOCKOUT…

Real Madrid v Arsenal

Real Madrid
The outlook is far brighter for the galacticos under new coach Juan Ramon Lopez Caro and the team are playing with much more unity and purpose. Ronaldo is back after a persistent calf problem and at last Robinho is fulfilling his potential. Real spent £10.5m in January on Sao Paulo right-back Cicinho and Roma bad boy attacker Antonio Cassano.

Henry

Arsenal
Still heavily dependent on the brilliance of Thierry Henry. Manager Arsene Wenger has a host of problems, not least mediocre away form, vulnerability against opponents who up the ante physically, and a defence undermined by injury and a loss of confidence. There are three new signings – midfielder Abou Diaby (Auxerre), teenage striker Theo Walcott (Southampton) and Togo forward Emmanuel Adebayor (Monaco).

Rangers v Villarreal

Rangers
Croat striker Dado Prso, stopper Julien Rodriguez, left-back Olivier Bernard and midfielder Brahim Hemdani are all finally out of the treatment room, while Kilmarnock's prolific striker Kris Boyd has arrived, and for just £585,000. But failure on the domestic front has left the fans baying for the blood of manager Alex McLeish and owner David Murray.

Riquelme

Villarreal
President Fernando Roig talks of winning a Spanish League title in five years, and to some that may seem a conservative estimate. Argentinian front-man Luciano Figueroa has returned home to play for River Plate, but Villarreal landed a sound replacement in Mexican Guillermo Franco. Much depends on playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme, but he is prone to muscular niggles.

Werder Bremen v Juventus

Werder Bremen
Influential midfielder Tim Borowski is back in action following a winter break groin operation and keeper Tim Wiese is available again after a knee ligament injury. But free-scoring striker Miroslav Klose is out for three months with a badly damaged shoulder.

Borowski

Juventus
Running away with Serie A and did not feel the need to bring in new blood in January. Juve contented themselves with lining up promising Parma midfielder Marco Marchionni for next season.

Milan striker Andrii Shevchenko says there's always room for improvement

'I'm

● How do you rate the past year?
Milan lost a dramatic Champions League Final, but on the other hand, Ukraine reached the World Cup finals. And that outweighs all the failures. Besides, being a natural optimist, I always try to find more pluses than minuses in any situation. That's why I'd rather say it was a good year.

● What happened to Milan in Istanbul?
There are some things you just cannot explain and that game was one of them. Not only did we allow Liverpool to get level by scoring three goals within six minutes in the second half, but later we missed a series of opportunities. Who can explain why my shot in the very last minute did not find the target? But in every game luck can decide everything.

● Were you angry with yourself for missing the decisive penalty in the shoot-out?
Not at all. It would be a sin to complain. I am not a scoring machine, like some people think. I am a living person with my own merits and weaknesses.

● Milan are still very much involved in the Champions League again. But in Serie A you seem to have blown your title chances.
Milan have one aim in all competitions – to win. We want to win both the Champions League and the *scudetto*.

● And you think you can win Serie A even though you're so far behind Juventus?
Why not? Sometimes incredible things happen.

IT'S A KNOCKOUT...

Ajax v Internazionale

Ajax
Four players left the club in the transfer window: French central defender Julien Escude (Sevilla), utility man Nigel De Jong (Hamburg), Romanian keeper Bogdan Lobont (Fiorentina) and Brazilian left-back Maxwell (Inter, though he will be loaned to Empoli until the end of the season). With Ajax struggling painfully in the Eredivisie, the days of coach Danny Blind seem numbered.

Internazionale
Coach Roberto Mancini was delighted with the acquisition of Brazilian left wing-back Cesar, who arrived in a swap deal from Lazio. But apparently some of the Inter squad were not so pleased, with memories still fresh of the new boy's part in unsavoury incidents in past Inter-Lazio fixtures.

Bayern Munich v Milan

Bayern Munich
English defensive midfielder Owen Hargreaves will probably miss the first leg following a groin operation. Paraguayan attacker Roque Santa Cruz is definitely out after having surgery on damaged knee ligaments. Bayern are still waiting to see if Michael Ballack goes or stays and, frankly, patience is wearing thin.

never satisfied'

Juventus can also flop. All we can do is try to win every game.

● How do you find your new partners in Milan's attack? Why did Christian Vieri not manage to settle?
It's wrong to say that he did not settle. Christian actually said in an interview that it had been a long time since he felt as good as he did with Milan. But in a World Cup year international players need to be playing regularly. That is why Vieri chose Monaco. As for another new player, Gilardino, we found a common language very quickly.

● You have again won *Sport Express's* Zvezda [Star] award for the best player from the former Soviet Union. But some say you have no competition.
I consider the Soviet football school, which we all belong to, very strong. A talented player can appear any time. And we already have such players, just maybe they lack something yet.

● Who, for example?
Oleh Husiev and Ruslan Rotan from Ukraine, Andrei Arshavin, Alexander Kerzhakov and Dmitri Sychev from Russia. They have great potential.

● You will be 30 in September. Is the end of your career in sight?
Absolutely not. At Milan, we have Paolo Maldini and Alessandro Costacurta, who are 37 and 39 years old respectively but still compete with the younger players.

● So you haven't thought about what you will do after retiring?
I can't say I have never thought about it. I just hope this is a question for the distant future. My main thoughts are still about progressing on the pitch.

● You have been Milan's captain during Maldini's absence through injury. Has that given you an added incentive?
Yes. Wearing the same armband as Baresi, Costacurta and Maldini is a great honour and an awesome responsibility.

'Milan have one aim in all competitions, whether Europe or Serie A – to win'

● You have been taking part in commercials more often of late. Have you thought about an acting career?
Oh, no! To act in commercials and be an actor are totally different things. For me, the latter is unreal. Besides, why should I distract myself from football, which gives me joy and pleasure?

● As a public person you face a lot of criticism. Yet unlike many celebrities you make yourself accessible to the media. Why?
Because I feel myself responsible to people and because openness is part of my personality.

● Is that down to your upbringing?
Yes. Besides, if someone wants to write dirty things about you, he will anyway. I just want to be myself, without betraying my principles.

● You do a lot of charity work – is that part of your personality as well?
I cannot say that I really do a lot. But, yes, I did establish a foundation that has already given some help to four orphanages.

● The public has become so used to your goals, is it hard to live up to expectations?
What really matters is yourself, not the fans. You must be sure to have given what you can on the pitch. Scoring comes second.

● So sometimes you're not satisfied with yourself?
Of course. Then I look at the reasons for my bad performance, study all my mistakes and aim not to repeat them. In short, I do a self-examination. All players need to learn to analyse their game and their mistakes. The most important thing for any player is his personal ambition to progress.

Interview by Boris Levin

Ballack

Milan
Despite the catastrophic recent form of keeper Dida and his back four, the Milan management surprisingly did not take advantage of the transfer window to bring in reinforcements. Confidence is low after an Italian Cup loss to Palermo and a string of off-key Serie A displays, and coach Carlo Ancelotti is walking on thin ice. Marco Van Basten, anyone?

Benfica v Liverpool

Benfica
Midfielder Nuno Assis has tested positive for an anabolic steroid and there was more pain from the 3-1 loss at home to Lisbon rivals Sporting. The jury is out about whether the new signings – keeper Moretto (Vitoria Setubal) and French winger Laurent Robert (Newcastle) – actually represent a step forward. At least star wide man Simao Sabrosa did not move on.

Liverpool
Premiership defeats at Manchester United and Chelsea have dampened down the euphoria that developed after a dozen League games without defeat. But with Xabi Alonso and Steven Gerrard so dominant in midfield and coach Rafa Benitez continuing to prove that Italians do not have a monopoly on meticulous gameplans, Liverpool's grip on the Champions League will not be easily loosened. The return of striking hero Robbie Fowler was not just designed to lift spirits in the crowd; it could also mean a sharper cutting edge – provided Fowler gets fit.

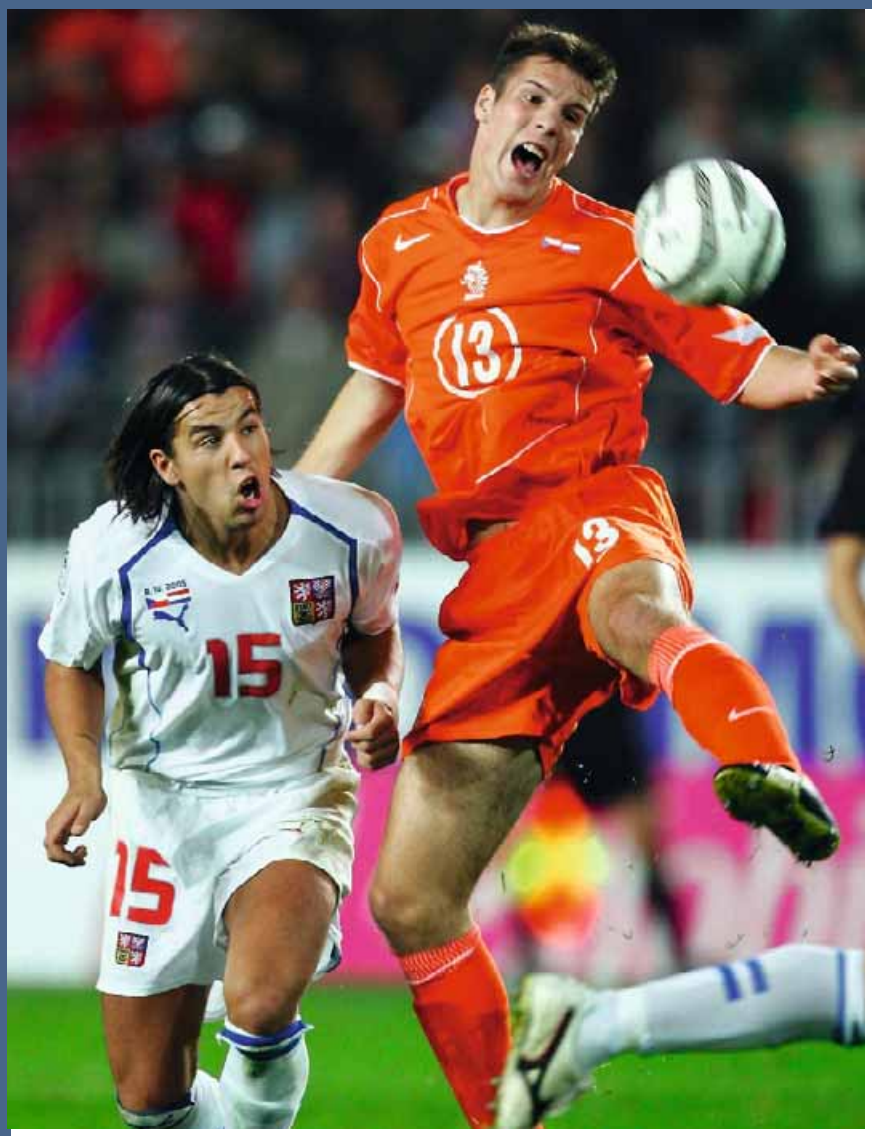
Gerrard

PSV Eindhoven v Lyon

PSV Eindhoven
Some have suggested coach Guus Hiddink could be tempted to take his eye off the PSV ball by thoughts of Australia's World Cup finals campaign and rumours that he might be the next England boss. Don't you believe it. On the transfer front, Australian striker Archie Thompson arrived from Melbourne Victory.

Lyon
Skipper and centre-back Claudio Cacapa is out of both legs after tearing a thigh muscle in training. He will be replaced by Swiss international Patrick Muller, who is back for a second spell at Stade Gerland from Basle. Lyon are light years ahead of the competition in Ligue 1 and could soon have their fifth consecutive title clinched, leaving them free to concentrate on Europe.

SIX OF THE BEST
JANUARY SIGNINGS



1 Ron VLAAR
(Feyenoord)

FEYENOORD'S NEW centre-back is not one to let grass grow under his feet. The 21-year-old won his first Holland cap last autumn despite having completed just a handful of League games for AZ, and he was equally quick off the mark when manoeuvring himself out of Alkmaar during the transfer window.

AZ had been hoping to tie him to his first professional contract. But Vlaar refused because he was unhappy about being confined to the bench for most of the season, and even had the brass neck to go public with criticism of the club's big-name coach, Louis Van Gaal. "He put me under pressure," Vlaar said. "I felt blackmailed, actually. He told me I would only play in emergencies if I didn't sign."

However, although Vlaar's departure was assured, his destination was not. Tottenham looked to have secured his services, only for the deal to fall through. Then his hopes of moving to Ajax were torpedoed by AZ chairman Dirk Scheringa, who was still seething over the defection of technical director Martin Van Geel to the Amsterdammers and was not inclined to hand over more manpower.

So Feyenoord stepped in, agreeing a £1.75million fee. "It was always my preference to play for a big Dutch club," Vlaar claimed. "When I knew that Feyenoord wanted me, I didn't have to think about it for long."

2 Nigel DE JONG
(Hamburg)

NIGEL DE JONG'S decision to swap Ajax for Hamburg had an air of predictability about it. While the Dutch club set great store by the mental strength of their young players, the flip side is those same starlets are never cowed by authority and go their own way regardless.

De Jong, 21, had been unsettled for some time, regularly airing his reasons for not renewing his contract. "I feel like a yo-yo," he said. "I go back and forth between the starting line-up and the bench. I don't want to be a yo-yo again. They either want me or they don't.

"It would have been nice if Ajax had told me at an earlier stage that they believed in me. I felt they waited too long to make their contract offer. I've also played in all kinds of different positions [right-back and everywhere in midfield] and I don't think that's been a good thing for my development."

Eager to avoid letting De Jong leave for free at the end of the season, Ajax had no choice but to sell in January at a knockdown fee. Tottenham, Sevilla and Borussia Dortmund all showed an interest. But Hamburg, who already had two Dutchmen in their side – ex-Ajax skipper Rafael Van der Vaart and former RKC defender Khalid Boulahrouz – proved the most persuasive and happily paid a mere £700,000.

Ajax coach Danny Blind suggested that De Jong was not ready to play abroad. Needless to say, the youngster had a different take. "I aim to be a success in the Bundesliga," said De Jong, whose father, Jerry, was a defender for PSV Eindhoven and Holland. "I'm joining a club with Champions League aspirations, they see me as a starter and I will be playing in my favourite position, a midfield holding role."

3 Andres D'ALESSANDRO

(Portsmouth)

LITTLE ARGENTINIAN playmaker Andres D'Alessandro had 30 largely off-colour months at Bundesliga side Wolfsburg, whom he joined from River Plate for £6.8million. Now the 24-year-old has three major challenges during a six-month loan at Portsmouth: to help his new club stave off relegation, rediscover the superb creativity of his early days at River, and force himself back into Argentina's World Cup plans.

Wolfsburg had tried to get D'Alessandro to rein in his creativity and do more closing down and tackling. "For Andres, the game is over when he doesn't have the ball," opined coach Klaus Augenthaler. "But I need 11 wild dogs who get stuck in."

But if Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp has any sense, he'll place D'Alessandro behind his strikers and tell him he has total freedom to weave his intuitive, left-footed magic. After all, it's not for nothing he has been dubbed the "Mini Maradona".

5 Bogdan LOBONT

(Fiorentina)

THE ROMANIAN keeper has been signed by Fiorentina from Ajax as a replacement for Frenchman Sebastien Frey, who may be out for three months after damaging a knee against Juventus. Lobont's top priority will be to stay injury-free himself.

The 28-year-old, who joined Ajax from Rapid Bucharest in 2000, played a key role as the Amsterdammers claimed the 2003-04 Dutch League title and was a fan favourite thanks to his irrepressible enthusiasm. But in almost six years in Holland, he played in only 69 matches because of a number of serious injuries.

Have Fiorentina taken a gamble by paying £700,000 for Lobont? Not according to former Romania and Internazionale coach Mircea Lucescu, now in charge at Shakhtar Donetsk. "Bogdan was incredibly unlucky in Holland," Lucescu says. "I hear he's in good shape and I'm confident he'll show Serie A his great agility and speed of reflexes."

4 Nemanja VIDIC

(Manchester United)

FIORENTINA, once more punching their weight in the Italian top flight, have just one regret this season – losing out to Manchester United in the auction for Spartak Moscow's highly-rated Serb central defender Nemanja Vidic.

In late November, the Tuscan side seemed to have got their man, and Vidic himself was telling the media in Belgrade that he was on the brink of signing. "I've always been attracted to the idea of playing in Serie A," said Vidic, the linchpin of a Serbia & Montenegro back-line that conceded only one goal in 10 World Cup qualifiers.

However, United also targeted the 24-year-old, the prospect of a glamour move to Old Trafford quickly turned the Serb's head, and a £7.2million offer spoke loudest.

6 Guillermo FRANCO

(Villarreal)

STRIKER GUILLERMO FRANCO should have no problem settling at Villarreal following his £1million move from Mexican side Monterrey. Spanish is his mother tongue since he was born in Argentina and is now a naturalised Mexican. He also knows just what to expect from coach Manuel Pellegrini, who was his boss at Buenos Aires club San Lorenzo from 2001 to 2002.

Franco, 29, is an intelligent, front-runner with the ability to pull deep to link the play. Above all, he is an excellent goalscorer, powerful in the air and an accurate finisher.

Monterrey will miss him badly. In four years with them he scored 59 League goals and was top scorer in the 2004 opening championship with 21. Franco also contributed 11 goals to Monterrey's closing championship triumph in 2003.

Franco took Mexican citizenship last year and was promptly selected by national coach Ricardo Lavolpe, scoring on his debut in a 5-2 World Cup qualifying win over Guatemala.

All profiles by Nick Bidwell

MAIN MEN

Juan Roman Riquelme

Argentina's gifted midfielder could be the star of the show in Germany

WILL JOSE PEKERMAN'S side field a back three or a back four? Will they play with a winger? Will Gabriel Heinze, Roberto Ayala and Javier Mascherano be fit in time? Argentina's build up to the World Cup is riddled with uncertainties.

Some say that the more Pekerman talks, the less he clarifies. But on one vital point Argentina's coach could not be clearer. From the day Pekerman was appointed, Juan Roman Riquelme has been the most important member of his team.

Constructing a midfield around Riquelme may now seem like an obvious move. Villarreal's former Boca Juniors favourite passed holes in Brazil's defence in Buenos Aires last June during Argentina's 3-1 World Cup qualifying win. A short while later, Germany coach Jurgen Klinsmann described him as "almost perfect" after the sides' 2-2 draw at the Confederations Cup.

But there was nothing obvious about the Riquelme option back in October 2004, when Pekerman took over.

At the time, Riquelme had won just 13 caps in seven years, most of them in friendlies. He played in the 1999 Copa America, when Argentina sent an experimental squad, but was overlooked for the World Cups of 1998 and 2002, and had never even started a qualifying match. He had also struggled at Barcelona, whom he joined from Boca, and not many were convinced he could reproduce his Boca form at international level, either. He was, it was widely believed, lacking half a yard of pace.

Pekerman did not agree. "Some say that Riquelme is slow," the coach said in one of his first interviews after taking the reins. "But there's nothing slow about him when he's in possession. It's the ball that should do the running, not the player."

Pass master

Riquelme's selection was not just because of a simple preference for a player. It was part of a manifesto for a type of football – traditional Argentinian passing football. Pekerman's side would seek to pass, pass and pass again. They would aim to have possession at all times, and dictate the rhythm of the game from the centre of the field. Riquelme's gift for giving a pass is unrivalled. With his foot-on-the-ball elegance and unhurried gait, he would be the controller in chief.

To some, it felt like the clock was being turned back. "We used to have players like Riquelme," said Pele recently. Indeed, Brazil once had a veritable production line for magnificent central midfielders. Not any more. They are as overflowing with talent as ever, but nowadays it is to be found either higher up the field or at full-back.

Other countries also churned out midfield generals, but this type of player is increasingly being squeezed out of the game. He is a victim of the frenetic rush towards ever-greater athleticism, and he can also fall foul of the dreaded statistical analysis. Recently, even Brazil's chief scout, Jairo Santos, argued that if a team take more than eight passes in a single move they are reducing their chances of scoring.

The traditional Argentinian school would completely disagree. It holds that the more the ball is passed, the more the opposing defence is shifted around and the greater the possibility of creating two-against-one situations and goalscoring chances. It all depends on the quality of the passing and movement, and the mix of long and short-range balls.

The modernists contend that the physical development of the game has reduced the amount of space available on the field and consequently cut the scope for passing moves. Argentina's traditionalists see it differently. For them, the problem stems from a lack of attention to basics.

'If he played in Brazil he'd be Riquelminho and the world No 1'

Jose Pekerman has no doubt about the quality of his playmaker

Local coach Angel Cappa writes that "the elementary steps that define a good player are that he receives the ball, passes, and then runs. Not the opposite. But increasingly frequently we see that when a player receives the ball, the first thing he does is run with it. Then when he looks up, it's already too late. He is surrounded, and if he tries to go forward he runs into an opponent. And so the journalists have a justification for their view that nowadays there is no space on the field. Of course there isn't; playing like that, the players close down their own space."

In contrast, Riquelme opens up the field, creating space and surprising opponents with his quick passing. By placing such a player at the centre of his plans, Pekerman is flying in the face of the contemporary idea that the game is won and lost either on set-pieces or on transitions, those moments when possession changes hands and a rapid counter-attack can be launched. Instead, control of midfield is king. As Riquelme says: "Pekerman wants us to have the ball for the entire game, and my job is to make sure that my team-mates can always find me to give me the ball."

Intelligence

So, Riquelme is in charge of the distribution, a task in which his intelligence is as important as his ability.

"I've seen very few players with Riquelme's capacity to understand the game," Pekerman said recently. "He knows everything that's going on around him. He can find any player with precision. He can tell you why a team is playing well or badly. He knows when to slow the game down and when to speed it up. Football is producing electrifying players, speed merchants. But it's losing the type of player like him who really knows what he's doing.

"If Roman played in Brazil he'd be Riquelminho and would be the world No 1. The way he strikes the ball is tremendous, and so is the coolness he shows when slipping his team-mates through on goal. But Brazilians are more highly rated. The decision to choose Ronaldinho as the best in the world was unfair."

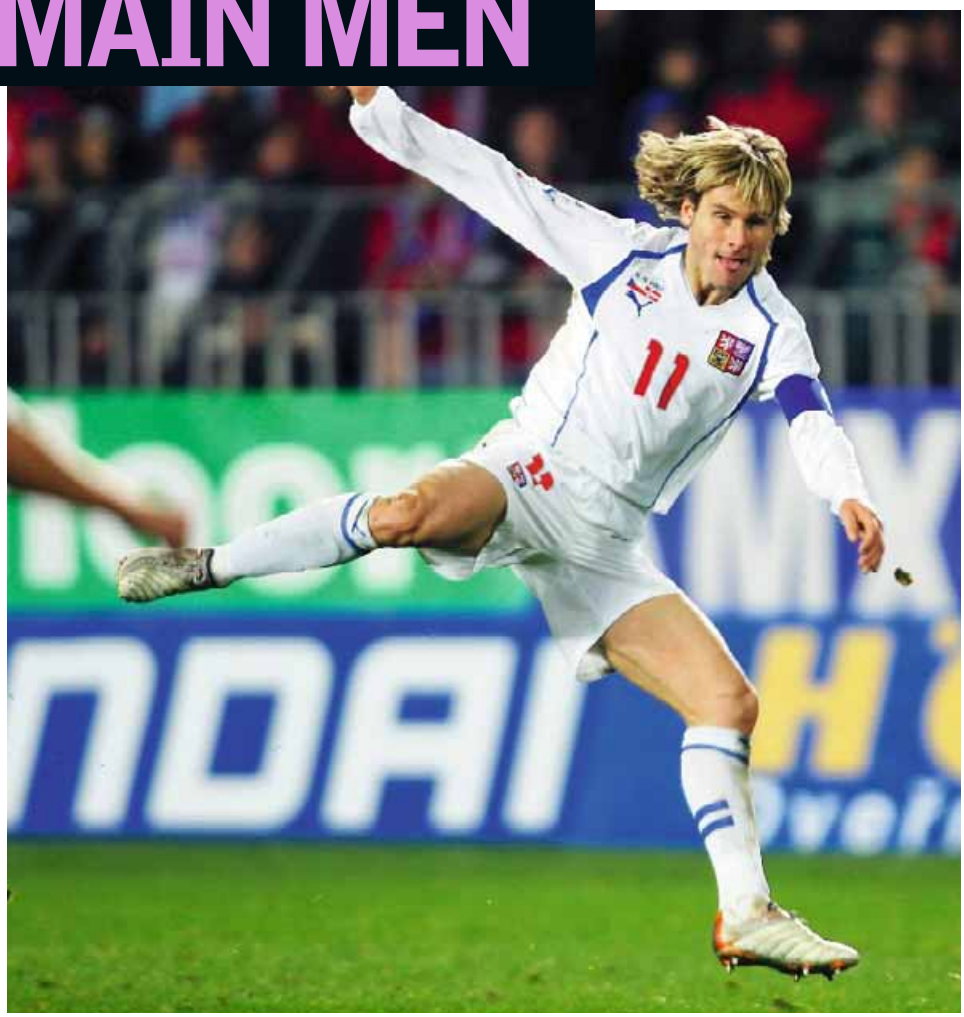
Riquelme, of course, has a wonderful opportunity to push his own claims for wider recognition at the World Cup. Approaching 28, he is now at his peak and has the backing of his coach, colleagues, Argentinian fans and media.

"Pekerman has given me the chance to have a solid run in the national team," he says. "I hope I don't let him or the rest of the team down. I'm happy playing for Argentina. The coach makes me feel good and my team-mates make me aware of my importance. The fact they're always looking to give me the ball boosts my confidence."

This is of great importance to a player who by nature is an introvert. Keeping him happy and his confidence high will be fundamental to Argentina's World Cup challenge. At times, Riquelme has been known to disappear from games. His team need him to be constantly imposing himself. If he hits form in June then Argentina's opponents will find out that his relentless passing is as gentle as Chinese water torture – and just as destructive.

Tim Vickery

MAIN MEN



Pavel Nedved

Czech maestro set to quit at the top

THE END IS IN sight for Pavel Nedved. Although this World Cup is, remarkably, his first, it will also be his last, because he will retire from international football after the finals.

The 33-year-old midfielder has already retired once, after Euro 2004, and did a U-turn only because of the team's injury crisis late on in the World Cup qualifying campaign. But having agreed to stay available for Germany, that will be that.

Nedved's future is already mapped out. Financially he has no worries since his contract with Juventus, which expires in 2008, is worth £5million. That sets him in an earnings bracket of his own, well beyond other Czech internationals such as Milan's Marek Jankulovski (£3m), Chelsea's Petr Cech (£2.2m), Borussia Dortmund's Tomas Rosicky (£2m) and Jan Koller (£1.6m), and Aston Villa's Milan Baros (£1.1m).

Nedved has his own luxury yacht in the Mediterranean – on which he entertained close friend and fellow national team veteran Karel Poborsky and his family last summer – plus the other trappings of fame and fortune. He may even pick up some loose change from television as an ice-hockey commentator; he has already been hired by Italian broadcaster RAI to work as a pundit during the Winter Olympics, taking place in his adopted home of Turin.

'He is out on his own because of his vision and technique'

But all such distractions will be banished soon enough. The Czechs begin their World Cup warm-up campaign with a friendly against Turkey on March 1 and from that point the frivolity stops.

The Czechs finished only runners-up, to Holland, in their qualifying group, but they came comfortably enough through their play-off, against Norway, winning both legs 1-0. That prompted Nedved to say: "We can win the World Cup." It was a brave statement, although the team are dangerous outsiders and have the ability to beat anyone.

They were World Cup runners-up to hosts Italy in 1938 and Brazil in 1962. Only Italy and Germany of the European nations have reached the Final on more occasions. The Czechs were also probably the best side at Euro 2004, but a knee injury early on in the semi-final against Greece crippled both Nedved and, in consequence, his team.

Veteran coach Karel Bruckner will have learned the lesson. That was why he appeared less concerned than Nedved's ego would have liked about the player's absence from the early World Cup qualifiers.

Best player

Bruckner sees football as a team game; the superstar concept is anathema. So the coach was content to rebuild the team after the Portugal finals in such a way that the players took their own responsibilities rather than concede possession to the gravitational pull of Nedved's personality.

For all that, Bruckner knows that to fulfil the hopes raised by the run to the semi-finals in Portugal, he will need his best player in Germany.

Rising Sparta Prague star Tomas Sivok may one day follow in Nedved's footsteps both in the heart of the national team and at Juventus. They work with the same agent, ex-national team striker Zdenek Nehoda, and Nedved has introduced Sivok at Juve, albeit under the simple guise of getting an autograph from hero Patrick Vieira.

But Nedved is out on his own in the current Czech set-up because of his vision, technique, passing range and footballing sixth sense, and his achievements stand comparison with any of his predecessors.

He started out with Dukla, joined Sparta, then it was on to Lazio in 1996 and Juventus in 2001. His trophies include a European Cup-winners Cup, a European Supercup, seven League titles in the Czech Republic and Italy, four Italian Supercups and one Czech Cup. The icing on the cake was the European Footballer of the Year award in 2003.

When he has to go out in Italy, Nedved tries to hide his identity from fans by donning sunglasses, a scarf and a baseball cap. In fact, the disguise is so over-the-top that he is instantly recognisable. Just as that mop of blond hair stands out during a game; but not as much, of course, as his talent.

Keir Radnedge

Julio Dos Santos

The main supplier of ammunition for Paraguay's forward line

EVEN IF Roque Santa Cruz loses his race to get fit in time for the World Cup, Paraguay's hopes of enjoying their best ever finals are based on their strikeforce. Nelson Haedo Valdez carries a real threat, the veteran Jose Cardozo wants to bow out at the top, and Dante Lopez came through fast in 2005.

The presence of such attacking strength in depth means that Julio Dos Santos is one of the most important members of the team. The 22-year-old is the supply line, the key link between midfield and attack. If Paraguay do reach the quarter-finals for the first time, then it could well be because Dos Santos is making the bullets for the strikers to fire – and probably firing a few himself.

Tall, unhurried and elegant, Dos Santos won instant comparisons with Argentina's playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme when he starred for his country at youth level. His style is also reminiscent of Germany's Michael Ballack. Dos Santos has a similar capacity to burst into the penalty area, and once there, shows the composure to finish well or set up a team-mate with a slick pass or a back-heel.

Bayern Munich certainly appear to agree with the Ballack comparison. The German champions have just bought Dos Santos, surely with the idea of grooming him to take over once Ballack moves on. They faced plenty of competition in the fight to prise the youngster away from Cerro Porteno, Paraguay's most popular side, swooping just as he seemed set to sign for Cadiz in Spain.

"I'm ready for the challenge and I'm not scared of the competition," Dos Santos said on his arrival in Germany, though he did confess that the defensive side of his game could be improved. Perhaps for this reason Bayern coach Felix Magath was showing caution. "He's made a big impression on us," he said, "but it might take him two or three years to adapt to the Bundesliga."

'Bayern look set to groom him to replace Ballack'

Dos Santos joined Cerro in 1997, made his way through the ranks, and won the championship with the senior side in 2004 and 2005, the first time they had taken back-to-back titles for three decades.

Meanwhile, he has been a growing force in the Paraguay team. He was taken to the 2004 Copa America for experience but was left out of the squad that won the Olympic silver medal later that year. His strong club form brought him a recall to the senior side in 2005, and he played well and scored goals. On the strength of that, he was pitched into the closing stages of the World Cup qualification campaign. Now, he has the chance to prove himself on the biggest stage of all.

Tim Vickery

Weekend breaks to Barcelona From £249

Weekend breaks to AC/Inter Milan From £225

Weekend breaks to Real Madrid From £289

Weekend breaks to Ajax From £269

redcard events

Weekend Football Breaks Across Europe

Get Sent Off in Style!

Red Card Events provides fantastic weekend breaks to 22 of the top clubs in Europe. We offer high quality breaks and great value for money. Our standard packages consist of:

- Scheduled flights
- Great match tickets
- 2 nights B&B at a 3* hotel in your chosen city centre
- City Guidebook

SPECIAL OFFER - All customers booking a package to Barcelona in the 2005-06 season will receive a FREE stadium tour and museum visit. For details of our Barcelona packages please visit the Barcelona page on our website – www.redcardevents.com

Receive a £10 Red Card Events gift voucher by subscribing to our monthly e-zine via the website and the chance of winning a £50 voucher in our monthly subscriber draw.

Flights + Accomodation + Match Tickets = redcard events

Visit our website at: redcardevents.com
Or call us on 0870 766 2506

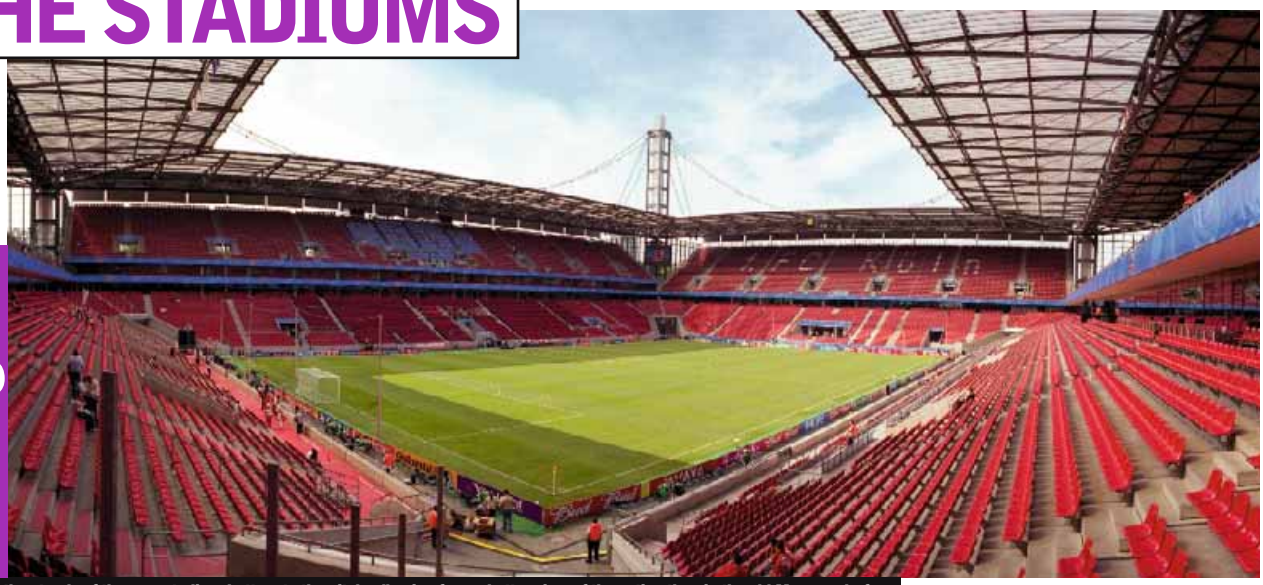
EXPERIENCE THE PASSION

The air holidays and flights available through Red Card Events are ATOL Protected by the Civil Aviation Authority.

Our ATOL number is ATOL 6386

THE STADIUMS

Cologne



Closer in…the stands of the new stadium butt up to the pitch, allowing fans a better view of the action than in the old Mungersdorfer

Place in history

THE FIFA World Cup stadium in Cologne is built on one of the most important spots in the development of the German game over the past 50 years. Its predecessor, the Mungersdorfer, completed in 1923, was home to internationals Hans Schafer, Karl Heinz Schnellinger, Wolfgang Overath, Pierre Littbarski and Toni Schumacher, and the trophy cabinet housed the first Bundesliga shield, won by Koln in 1964.

Not only that, but nearby is the national sports academy, the finishing school of so many top-class German coaches over the years.

Despite its fine heritage, the Mungersdorfer did not host games at the 1974 World Cup because of city hall wrangles over the cost of a necessary modernisation programme. Ironically, by the winter of the following year it was at the cutting edge of German stadia after the financial obstacles were overcome and the stadium was reconfigured. The new-look arena was the first completely covered ground in the country, a two-tier, 61,000-capacity ellipse with more than a hint of Wembley about it.

The passing years would take their toll once more, however, and following the decision to give Germany the 2006 World Cup, the Cologne authorities were determined not to be bystanders again. The design of the new arena and its financing were agreed upon without delay – the city paid £18million of the total bill of £85m, with the rest from private investors – and between the summer of 2001 and the spring of 2004, the old bowl was gradually turned to dust and replaced by a much more modern, compact stadium, comprising four towering double-decker stands built close to the pitch. No more running track, no more feelings of isolation from the action for the 46,134 all-seated spectators.

Quite simply, the stadium is an architectural wonder. It also boasts a novel feature – the four 72-metre masts that both support the roof and act as illuminated beacons. By night, the arena is a spectacular sight and visible from miles away. Highly appropriate, really, given that the stadium is named after sponsor Rhein Energie, the local power suppliers, either side of FIFA events.

Nick Bidwell

Inside story

Leipzig

Ground within a ground…the Zentralstadion

ARCHITECTS OFTEN pay lip service to allying tradition and modernity. However, at Leipzig's Zentralstadion, the sole World Cup venue in the former East Germany, they were true to their word.

In an innovative move, the city council decided in 1997 to construct a new high-tech arena within the walls of the existing stadium, a crumbling, 100,000-capacity ground finished in 1956, which with its open, oval shape and huge tilting bank of floodlights was an identikit post-war eastern European bowl, massive but bland.

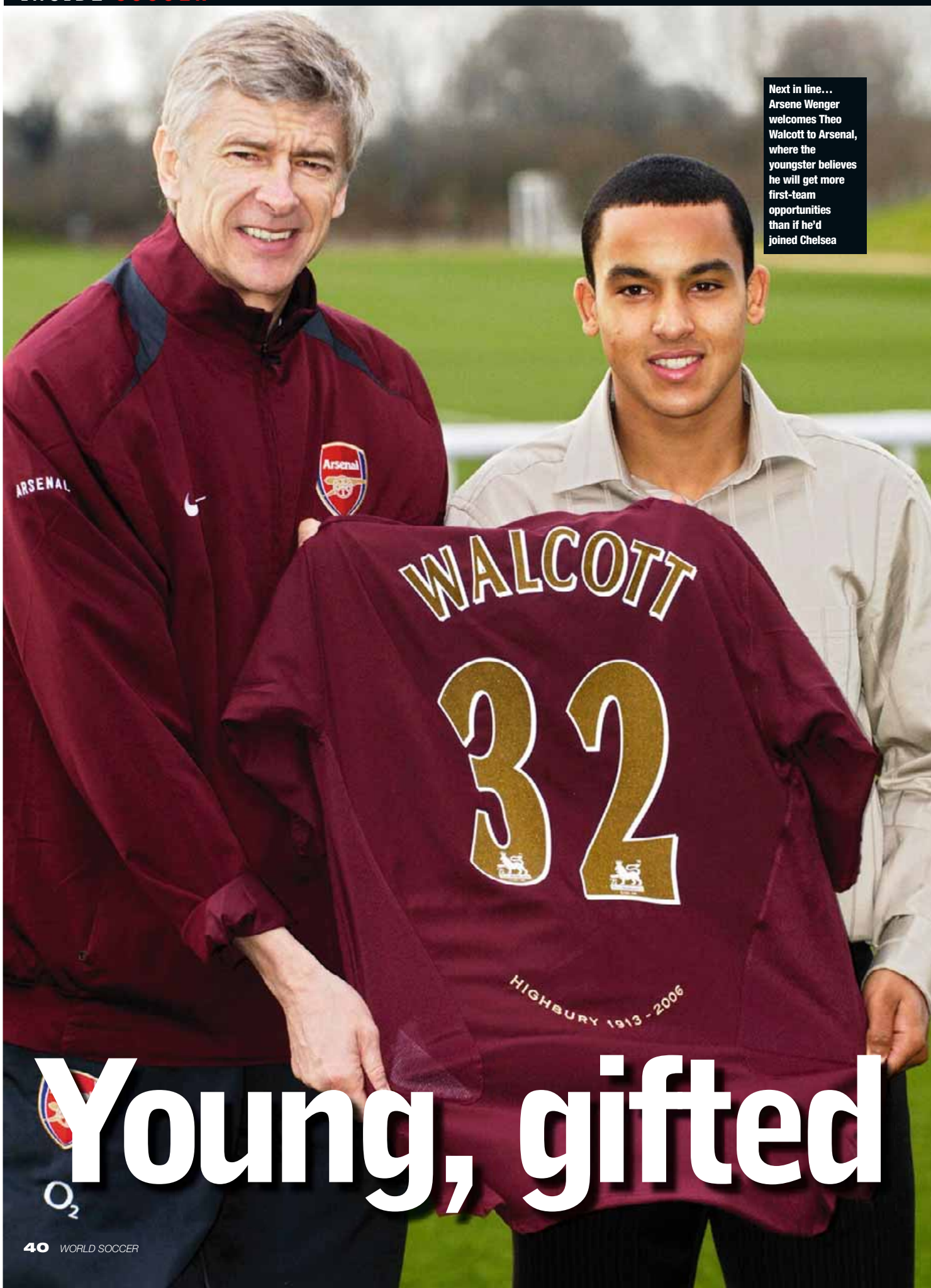
The juxtaposition of the historical and the futuristic has worked brilliantly. Fans reach their seats via a series of walkways that link the walls of the old stadium with its 38,898-capacity, all-seater younger brother. On entering the new arena, the eye is immediately drawn to its all-enveloping curved roof, built without pillars and featuring integrated floodlights.

The old Zentralstadion was a rather soulless, drab place, whether it was staging East Germany internationals, Lokomotiv Leipzig's European fixtures or Communist Party sports rallies. The same cannot be said of the new arena. It simply oozed warmth and atmosphere, not to mention functionality and attractiveness, when used to stage games at last year's Confederations Cup. It is a shame, then, that the city does not have a club side worthy of the £64million facility; residents Sachsen Leipzig currently play in Germany's fourth tier.

Nick Bidwell

Missed a copy of the world's most widely-read football magazine? We now have back issues available to buy

To purchase a back issue, please phone June Hiscock on +44 (0) 20 7261 5714 or e-mail her at june_hiscock@ipcmedia.com to receive price and payment details



Next in line… Arsene Wenger welcomes Theo Walcott to Arsenal, where the youngster believes he will get more first-team opportunities than if he'd joined Chelsea

Young, gifted

Europe's biggest clubs trawl the waters for boy wonders they hope will be tomorrow's superstars. By Keir Radnedge

THEO WALCOTT's recent signing by Arsenal from Southampton at the age of 16 for a multi-million pound fee made plenty of column inches. But the Walcott story is far from unique; it merely replicates the manner in which all Europe's top clubs are pursuing talent at ages that open them up to charges of cradle-snatching.

Leo Messi, Eric Lamela, Niall Mason, Nikon Jevtic and Jean Carlos Chera "Anderson" are just some of the other names who have emerged or have the potential to emerge on the world's biggest footballing stages from the game's kindergartens.

It was Walcott's price-tag – £12million – that made his transfer such a big splash. Not that Arsenal have paid all that yet. The Gunners made a £5m down-payment, with more to come as the youngster, who turns 17 on March 16, graduates in both Premiership and international football.

For once, at least, Arsenal managed to beat Chelsea, even though the champions had offered £15m. "It is clear Chelsea have superior financial power to anyone else, but they have one big problem – only 11 players can be on the pitch at any one time," said Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, putting his finger on his club's single bargaining advantage over their super-rich London rivals. "What matters most for any footballer is being able to play, not sit on the bench."

This was the second time Walcott had turned down Chelsea. At 11, he had a youth trial with Swindon, and his family were approached by both Chelsea and Southampton. He says: "I just thought I'd get more chances with Southampton." He was right first time, and the same is likely to be true at Arsenal.

Walcott, his family and advisers had already made it clear he preferred to join Arsenal because he expected more opportunities and quicker progress.

Southampton had little option but to sell. Chairman Rupert Lowe has been coming under increasing pressure over the need to return to the Premiership, from which they were relegated last season. The appointment of George Burley in succession to Harry Redknapp was one step towards this. Another was raising transfer cash through the sale of Walcott, who scored five goals in 12 starts for the first team.

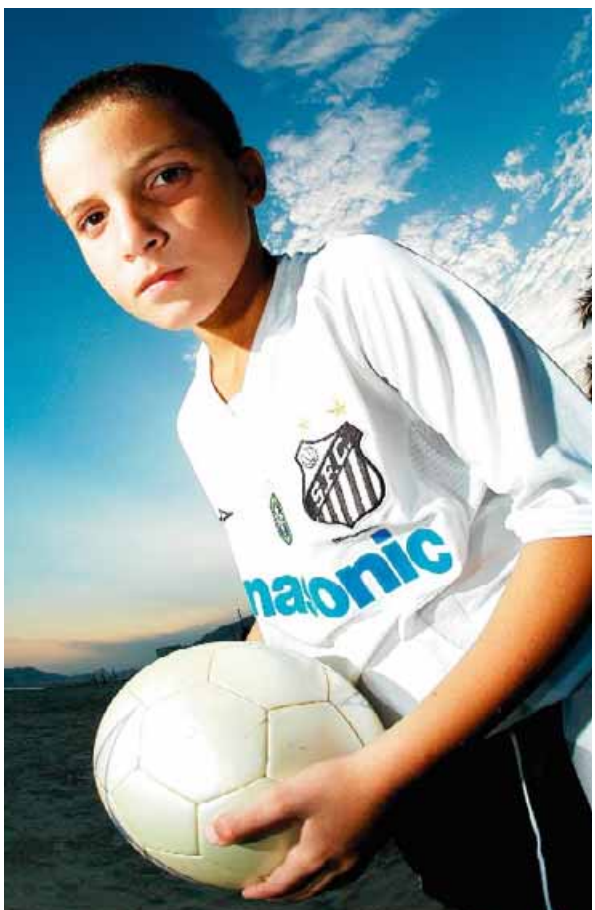
Arsenal now have a very pacy teenager – he was a schools sprint champion – and also one who models his game on that of Thierry Henry. Walcott says: "I suppose I play in a similar way. I like to drift out wide and use my pace to wrong-foot opponents."

Messi model

Arsenal will be delighted if Walcott explodes into senior football with the power of Messi at Barcelona, for whom he has produced a string of match-winning goals and performances.

The Argentinian had been snapped up by the Catalans aged just 13. Indeed, Messi has been with Barcelona so long that officials of the Spanish federation tried to select him for the Spanish youth squad before he pointed out to them that he was born and brought up in the Argentinian city of Rosario. The length of his residence in Spain also led to a row last autumn between Barcelona and the Spanish federation over whether he qualified to play in La Liga as an assimilated player. After several months' wrangling Barca have got their way – and been well rewarded for their persistence.

Messi has also shown his prowess on the international stage, enjoying a triple triumph at last summer's World Youth Cup in Holland. Not only did he captain his country to victory in the Final but he also carried off the best player and top scorer awards.



Staying home…but how long can Santos hold on to Anderson?

Barcelona signed another Argentinian, Lamela, in 2004 when he was barely nine. Simultaneously, seven-year-old Mason became Real Madrid's fourth English signing of recent years, after David Beckham, Michael Owen and Jonathan

and signed

Little big star…at 13, Nikon Jevtic has already made a striking impression with Valencia

Woodgate. Madrid usually accept boys aged only eight or above at their training schools. But they bent the rules to admit Mason after he impressed at a summer camp.

Also in Spain, at Valencia, is 13-year-old Serb Jevtic, whose family took literally his ambition to become a footballer, voiced at the age of five. His father is his agent, elder brother Nestor his personal coach and sister Milly his schoolteacher, above all in a command of English, deemed essential for tomorrow's superstar.

Video deal

Nestor believes he can correct in Nikon the failings that prevented him making the grade. He says: "I didn't make it because my coaches didn't correct the technical weaknesses in my game. But the individual sessions I have devised for Nikon will turn him, instead, into a star."

The family left Serbia for London amid the turmoil of the past decade in their homeland, and Nikon was eyed by Arsenal and West Ham. Nothing concrete developed, so the family moved to Austria and then Germany. Former World Cup defender Karlheinz Forster secured him a youth trial with Stuttgart, but Valencia took the risk of snapping him up on the strength of a video sent to them, among others, by Nestor.

"I've never seen such technique in a boy of his age. His speed, control and dribbling skill are far superior to the average," says Valencia's youth director, Jose Claramunt, the former Spain midfielder. "You can see his brother's work paying off. We were interested in his theories. Now we're convinced this is something serious."

One superboy staying home – but for how long? – is nine-year-old Brazilian Anderson, for whom Santos claim to have beaten off competition from Manchester United, FC Porto and Internazionale, among others.

Club spokesman Aldo Neto says: "Our football people assure us that he is something special and has exceptional skills for his age, even by Brazilian standards."

Will Jevtic, Lamela, Mason and Anderson be following in the footsteps of Messi or will they go the way of England's Kane Jackson? At seven, he appeared to have everything. Not only the necessary skills but also a kit deal, lawyer, agent and queue of clubs offering between £10,000 and £50,000. A decade later and he was working as a labourer on a Manchester building site, disillusioned and discarded.

Father Tony says: "It was too much, too soon. By the time he was 12, Kane didn't want to do it any more because he was feeling exploited. The sums being promised and then the promises being nearly always broken destroyed his confidence."

The English FA and Premier League have drawn up rules to protect youngsters. Until 1993, clubs could not – officially – contact youngsters until they were 14. Now they can sign children to their academies from the age of nine but cannot offer professional contracts until 17.

'The sessions I have devised for Nikon will turn him into a star'

Personal coach Nestor Jevtic has plans for his kid brother

Why the pursuit of such young kids? "We can't officially sign them until they are in their ninth year," says Bolton's academy director, Chris Sulley. "But we do need to catch them early because children's motor skills are at their most receptive between six and 12. If we can get these children coached and developed technically from that early age that will lay the foundation for them to develop."

The new FIFA regulations forbidding the transfer between different countries of players under the age of 18 means that clubs are looking at new ways of scouting talent. But it does not always work. Southampton took over a franchise West Ham had set up in Perth, Australia, but quickly abandoned it.

Academy graduates

Former French midfielder Jean-Marc Guillou set up an academy of his own in Ivory Coast and then tied up a nursery deal with Belgian club Beveren, whom he joined as general manager. Within months the majority of the senior squad were his academy graduates.

Not everyone appreciated the development. The negative publicity has prompted Beveren to end the deal with Guillou, though the Frenchman is now opening a similar academy in Thailand.

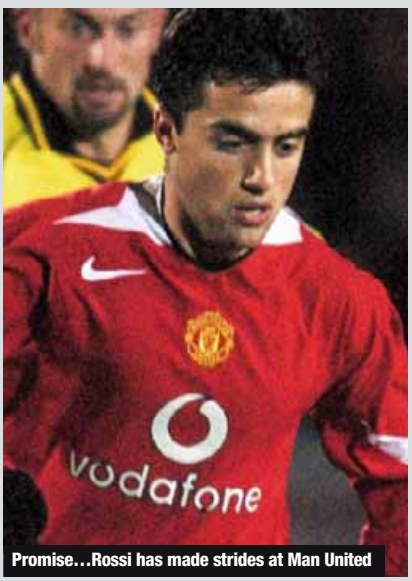
An organised nursery system is one thing, the transatlantic cherry-picking of individual kids quite another. The latter raises far more complex issues. Unfortunately, responsibility cannot be laid solely at the doors of the clubs or FIFA. Regulating ambitious parents – as any junior referee will know – is another matter entirely.

Thumbs up…Barca are just wild about Messi

The top teenagers signed at an early age by the world's wealthiest clubs

Scouting for talent

Tangle…Mikel has been caught in a club war



Promise…Rossi has made strides at Man United

Hoping…Adu is targeting the Premiership

Theo Walcott
Arsenal & England
Born: 16.03.89
Forward who joined Arsenal from Southampton in January in a deal worth up to £12million. But Southampton chairman Rupert Lowe complained that he was forced to accept Arsenal's offer or risk losing the youngster via a loophole, which allows academy players who have not yet signed professional terms, such as Walcott, to end their scholarship agreements and move to another club for limited compensation.

Lionel Messi
Barcelona (Spa) & Argentina
24.06.87
Wonderkid who has taken La Liga by storm this season amid the inevitable claims that he is the new Maradona. Just 13 when he moved to Barcelona from his home town of Rosario in Argentina, with Barcelona finding accommodation and employment for his family.

Carlos Vela
Celta Vigo (Spa) & Mexico
01.03.89
Top scorer at last year's World Youth Cup (for Under-20 sides), but there are conflicting reports about which club owns his contract. Guadalajara announced last year that the 16-year-old had been sold to Arsenal, but the English club refused to confirm this. Now reports in Spain claim Celta Vigo have signed Vela on a five-year contract after he failed to obtain a work permit to play for Arsenal. Whoever signed Vela appears to have broken FIFA's regulations on the capture of players aged under 18.

John Obi Mikel
Lyn (Nor) & Nigeria
22.04.87
Subject of a bitter dispute between Manchester United and Chelsea, with United prepared to report the London club to FIFA for an illegal approach to Mikel. The youngster apparently agreed to join United when he turned 18 last April, but seemed to have his head turned by Chelsea, who now claim to be his preferred choice.

Arturo Lupoli
Arsenal (Eng) & Italy
24.06.87
Parma-born striker who made a controversial switch from his hometown club's youth system to Arsenal in July 2004, with the English side paying around £200,000 in compensation.

Giuseppe Rossi
Manchester United (Eng) & Italy
01.02.87
America-born striker who left Parma at the same time as Lupoli for an undisclosed fee and has shown much promise at Manchester United.

Freddy Adu
DC United & United States
02.06.89
The wonderkid of American soccer who has stated his desire to play in the English Premiership as the next stage in his career. Much has been made of DC United's achievement in resisting offers from overseas and keeping him in Major League Soccer, but under FIFA regulations he will not be permitted to move abroad until June 2007 anyway.

Giovani Dos Santos
Barcelona (Spa) & Mexico
11.05.89
One of Mexico's stars when they won last year's Under-17 World Championship. Dos Santos has been at Barcelona since 2001, along with his younger brother. He is the son of former Brazilian player Zizinho, who played in the Mexican First Division.

Jonathan De Guzman
Feyenoord (Hol)
13.09.87
Canada-born midfielder who has been with Feyenoord since the age of 12 and has been offered the chance to play for both Canada and Holland. Elder brother Julian, of Deportivo La Coruna, is an established Canadian international.

Alexandre Song
Arsenal (Eng) & Cameroon
04.09.87 or 04.04.87
Cameroonian who can play in defence or midfield. Arsenal claim he was born in April 1987, making him over 18 when they signed him from Bastia in summer 2005, but official FIFA documents from the 2003 World Under-17 Championship list his birthday as September 4, 1987.

Marseille: The scandal is revived

As new allegations are made about the 1993 affair, it's clear French football has yet to face some home truths

PHILIPPE X, one-time leader of Marseille's most notorious gang of Ultras, was largely correct in his summing-up of the reawakening of the scandal surrounding the club's 1993 Champions Cup victory by former midfielder Jean-Jacques Eydelie. He said: "Olympique Marseille are always an easy target. You're talking about a controversial era, because a lot of people were jealous of the European Cup success, and a man in Bernard Tapie [club president and owner at the time] who is still controversial today.

"I don't think people down here are too worked up about it; they understand that it's a commercial issue undertaken by an old footballer who wants to make some easy money. OK, the publishers of his book have got their publicity, but they must be pretty desperate. To rake up the Valenciennes business more than 12 years later is pretty pathetic."

Different times…different people…different era…no point looking back – this cliche has been trotted out in recent weeks by most of the people central at the time, including players such as Didier Deschamps and Marcel Desailly, and coaching aide Jean Fernandez, now Marseille's head coach.

Tapie himself – still up to his ears in the legal and financial fall-out from the collapse of his business empire – has threatened libel writs in all directions to quash all talk of back then.

But a conspiracy of silence does not serve the French game well. The image of French football abroad – of the glorious achievements in World Cup and European Championship of Deschamps, Desailly, Zinedine Zidane and Thierry Henry – is a facade for a disturbed domestic game. For the big names to pretend otherwise is dangerously counter-productive.

The basic facts are these.

On May 26, 1993, Marseille became the first French club to win the Champions Cup, beating Milan 1-0 in the Final at Munich's Olympiastadion. Less than 24 hours later it emerged that Marseille had fixed a French League match away to Valenciennes the previous week.

The 1-0 win in that game ensured that Marseille went to Munich certain of being domestic champions again and so free to concentrate solely on winning the European Cup.

The tangle had begun to unravel even during the game at Valenciennes. At half-time, the hosts had protested to referee Jean-Marie Veniel that Marseille had tried to bribe three of their players – forward Christophe Robert, Argentinian World Cup winner Jorge Burruchaga and midfielder Jacques Glassmann.

Before the game Robert's wife had been handed the equivalent of £30,000 in cash at the Marseille team hotel by Eydelie. She buried it in her mother's garden. When Robert tried to draw his team-mates into the scandal, Glassmann blew the whistle. Nine days after Marseille's Munich triumph, the French League called in the public prosecutor.

In time it emerged that Marseille had fixed far more than just the Valenciennes match. Tapie aides had siphoned off cash into various anonymous bank accounts in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. With the help of a small army of agents, this money was used to pay under-the-counter bonuses, swing transfer deals and influence referees.

Tapie eventually went to jail for match-fixing in 1997. The former minister in Francois Mitterrand's government was sentenced to two years, of which he served eight months, and was banned from football involvement for a mere five years. Eydelie, Burruchaga, Robert and Marseille general manager Jean-Pierre Bernes received *sine die* bans, later commuted. Marseille were stripped of their 1993 League title and relegated as punishment. They were also barred from the following season's Champions Cup.

Now, Eydelie, then a wing-back or midfielder, has raked over the coals by claiming he and his team-mates were also doped for the Milan match.

Eydelie says the injection he received before the Milan game was not actually beneficial

'I felt strange during the match. My body didn't react as usual'

His motivation may be guessed from context. After completion of what proved to be a three-year ban and one-year suspended jail sentence, he struggled to pick up his career. He now lives with his wife and five children on state benefits.

The book Philippe X referred to is on its way and this provided the material published in *L'Equipe's* Saturday magazine in January that reopened the whole affair.

Eydelie's incentive

Eydelie, who had been promised a new five-year contract by Marseille if he pulled off the Valenciennes scam, says: "For Marseille's directors at the time deceit was second nature. But very little ever leaked out. Over the years many players who came to play for Marseille were involved in match-fixing. We were all asked, at one time or another, to phone an old team-mate or friend to 'make the arrangements'. All the players knew about it." Of course, "all the players" have been hasty with their denials.

But the doping claim is the new element in the recent revelations. "Before the match we were told to queue up to receive an injection of something," Eydelie alleges. "Rudi Voller (our German centre-forward) was the only one to kick up a fuss. He went around yelling at everyone in the changing-room in German.

"I felt strange during the match. My mouth was very dry and my body didn't react like it used to. I didn't know what the injection was supposed to do. But I think it inhibited me more than anything else. It was the first and last time I agreed to take something."

Eydelie also says that while Marseille's players were queueing up for their jabs, Tapie was storming up and down in the corridor outside demanding doping checks after the game because "he said the Italians were doped up to the eyeballs".

Former Republic of Ireland forward Tony Cascarino, who played in France for several years, has talked of the widespread use of "vitamin" injections in the French game. That supports Eydelie's insistence that such practices were commonplace "at just about every club I played for, except Bastia". One popular "hidden" stimulant

Heart of the matter…Marseille's Franck Sauzee bursts through during the fixed game against Valenciennes

was Captagon, while the use of creatine-based supplements was widely acknowledged. But, then, creatine is a naturally-produced substance and its administration has always been a grey area.

Doping controls were already in place at the Final of European club competitions, but no positive tests were recorded by UEFA monitors after the Milan game. On that basis, says Michel Platini – now France's leading committee man within both FIFA and UEFA – the European federation has been correct to baulk at launching a new formal inquiry into Munich '93.

Chief executive Lars-Christer Olsson will keep a watching brief but, in any case, the affair is now out of time. Olsson says: "A case like this is never fully closed because it depends on what else comes up, but it was also the view of our medical experts that it would be impossible at this stage to identify if drugs were used in 1993. Having players saying they got an injection before the match doesn't, on its own, give much ground for an investigation."

Current Marseille coach Fernandez rejects Eydelie's accusations outright, saying: "Marseille then had the best team in France and one of the best in Europe. I don't see why we would have fixed matches or used doping. This is crazy."

But the doping claims were welcomed in Italy, where many fans, directors and officials believe Serie A clubs – notably Juventus and Fiorentina – have been the scapegoats for too long for a problem rife throughout European football.

Milan's executive director, Adriano Galliani, jumped on the Eydelie story, saying: "I am shocked. It makes me very sad to see old wounds being reopened. But clearly UEFA must open an inquiry. If they don't, we will ask them to do so, officially. Our lawyer, Leandro Cantamessa, is looking into the matter now."

Milan did not do so badly out of Marseille's international suspension, stepping up to play in both the European Supercup and the World Club Cup, though they lost in both – to Parma and Sao Paulo respectively.

Monaco also benefited, taking Marseille's place in the following season's Champions Cup and reaching the semi-final group stage.

Wenger's view

Their coach then was Arsene Wenger, who has provided some of the more sensible analysis of that era. "These new stories did not surprise me. Those are things that I knew, that many people knew," says the Arsenal manager. "We are talking about the worst period French football has been through. It was gangrenous from the inside because of the influence and the methods of Tapie at Marseille."

Today, Robert Louis-Dreyfus, millionaire owner of "new" Marseille, is about to go into court on charges of misuse of club funds; Paris Saint-Germain and Nike France are being investigated for allegedly "hiding" wage payments in promotional agreements; a dozen or more transfers are being investigated for suspicion of money-laundering; and Third Division Besancon are demanding an inquiry into match-fixing of which they claim to have been victims last season. Meanwhile, the federation is running a steady debt and a vicious internal war has been raging over the legal status and administration of the refereeing system.

The basic problem is that French society has not come to terms with professional football's commercial status as a corner of the entertainment industry. Football is still, at base, a recreation, and that is one reason why a possible Platini presidency of UEFA raises such concern elsewhere in western Europe.

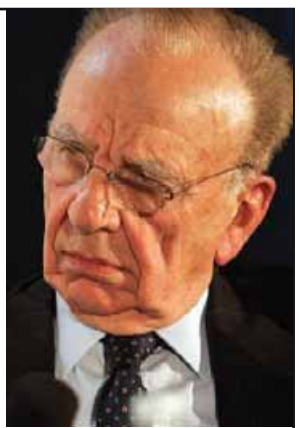
For 99.9 per cent of players, football is an amateur, grassroots enjoyment. For 0.1 per cent it provides a lucrative living. England, Germany, Spain and other countries appear to have found a rough and ready means to balance the two sides of the sport: amateur and professional.

France has still to make the journey. Lyon are pushing hard and have finally won the right for clubs to go to the stock market to raise funds. But the more they push the boundaries at the top, the greater the resistance from beneath.

That dynamic spells exactly the same trouble as it brought Marseille in the early 1990s (as well as Bordeaux and Saint-Etienne to lesser degrees), and it will cause more problems until French football business can be done over the counter, instead of under it. To that extent, Eydelie's memoirs may serve a useful purpose.

MOVERS & SHAKERS ...the headline-makers off the pitch

Power of the press baron



Rupert MURDOCH...
not satisfied with controlling the daily life of the English Premier League through BSkyB, he now also dictates the executive appointments policy of the country's Football Association via the *News of the World*.

Remember the downfall of Mark Palios as chief executive? FA secretary Faria Alam became merely the means to an end after publication of a "confidential" negotiating phone call with then communications director Colin Gibson.

Now the UK's biggest-selling Sunday newspaper has been at it again, this time using the "fake sheikh" – investigations editor Mazeer Mahmood – to remove Sven Goran Eriksson as England manager.

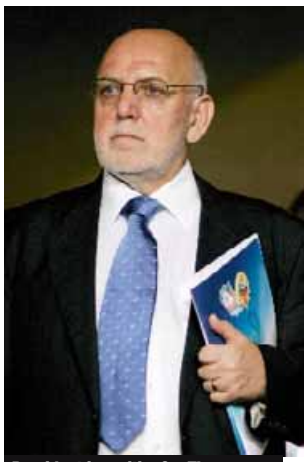
Eriksson had a contract running until 2008. No one believed he would see it through, but nor did anyone know how his departure after the World Cup would be managed.

Enter Murdoch's secret weapon. That Eriksson did not see the Dubai-centred sting coming was perhaps not such a surprise, given his failure to learn from previous media maulings. More surprising, perhaps, was that alarm bells did not ring for his agent, Athol Still; the "sheikh's" previous scams had turned over other sports stars, public figures and royalty.

Eriksson survived the initial revelations of his relatively modest comments about his England players; but the second instalment finished him off – bizarrely, since nothing had changed; it was basically the same story from the previous week.

The difference was that the second week's tittle-tattle – for that's all it was, office gossip – put the phrases "Premier League" and "bung culture" together. Given that the PL largely controls the executive board of the FA, and given the xenophobia underlying much of the media criticism of Eriksson, it was clear he was dead in the water. FA chief executive Brian Barwick, his hand forced, promptly negotiated the terms for Eriksson's delayed dismissal.

Eriksson's successor? Better ring News International and check first with Mr Murdoch's office.


President in waiting?...Thompson

Geoff THOMPSON...
the English FA chairman may have been invisible during the recent Sven Goran Eriksson turmoil but his diligence has made an impression within UEFA. So much so that he is emerging as a possible compromise choice for president when Lennart Johansson steps down next year.

Michel Platini has already declared his intention to run and Franz Beckenbauer is looking more favourably on the idea as his World Cup duties enter their final phase. But the Frenchman's revisionist views may cost him votes among the continent's big federations, while the German could suffer a backlash from his country's negativity towards Europe's minnow nations down the years.

These have never been the only potential candidates, of course. UEFA's long-serving Turk, Senes Erzik, is among the interested parties, though his candidacy may have been terminally damaged from within; not so much by the Turkey-Switzerland World Cup farrago but by the bust-up between the Turkish government and federation over alleged financial mismanagement.

Cue Thompson.

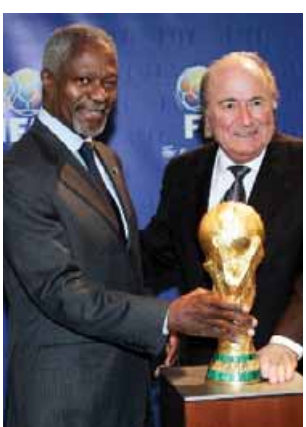
Jack WARNER...
the CONCACAF president is never far from the limelight around World Cup time. Quite right, too, when one considers all the financial sacrifices he says he has made on behalf of football in Trinidad & Tobago, his homeland, down the years.

He does have his critics, among them journalist Lasana Liburd of the *Trinidad Express*, who reported a controversial World Cup ticket promotion run by a Warner-owned travel agency.

Warner also has his supporters, however. For example, local football officials tried to bar Liburd's application for accreditation to cover the World Cup. The journalist duly went over their heads to FIFA.

The ensuing war of words could now run all the way to Germany.

Kofi ANNAN...
met the other "global statesman", FIFA president Sepp Blatter, during the first visit by a United Nations Secretary-General to FIFA House. The occasion enhanced Blatter's vision of his organisation's agenda for football's role in improving society – world peace, tolerance among nations, etc. But the achievement of


Global statesmen...Annan and Blatter

that will be easier said than done. Take Iran. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has rejected demands that Iran be barred from the World Cup finals because of their nuclear activities; for one thing, when Germany made their bid for the hosting rights, the then government had to sign a guarantee of right of entry to all participants

(players, officials, fans) from all the finalist nations.

Mind you, Iran do have problems going into the finals. The federation has found it impossible to arrange warm-up friendlies in other countries because of the nuclear issue, which is concentrating high-level political minds such as…Kofi Annan.

French disconnection…Al-Fayed

Mohamed AL-FAYED…
the Fulham owner's Harrods store attracts plenty of French tourists, but few French football officials have been trying to sell Fulham a player in recent weeks. They must have learned their lesson. Fulham's French connections have proved painful for everyone but the lawyers.

Jean Tigana was sacked as manager and sued, winning a counter-claim, while Fulham dragged the transfers of both Steve Marlet and Louis Saha all the way to the Court of Arbitration for Sport – and lost both times. They were ordered to pay Lyon £3.2million as a final settlement of the purchase of Marlet, then were ordered to stump up their £2m cut of the sell-on fee when Saha left Fulham for Manchester United.

Andre HELLER…
will sit out the World Cup. He is the artistic director who dreamed up the format for the finals' opening gala, which had been due to take place at Berlin's Olympic stadium on June 7, six days before the first game there. FIFA cancelled the misbegotten event for fear of the effects of all the paraphernalia on the troubled pitch at the redeveloped arena. "Football is about pitches not parties," said president Sepp Blatter, whose Road to Damascus conversion is welcome news after the kitsch catastrophe that was the World Cup draw in Leipzig.

Sepp BLATTER…
never misses a political trick. Before becoming FIFA president in 1998, he promised he would take the World Cup to Africa – where it will duly go, to South Africa, in 2010. Blatter reminded everyone of the fact when he addressed delegates of the African confederation just before the Nations Cup in Egypt. Just in case anybody needed reminding ahead of next year's FIFA presidential poll.

Franco COLOMBA…
the former Livorno coach has just won a bonus for failure. Colomba was sacked in the middle of last season with Livorno in the relegation zone. However, his contract had included a clause guaranteeing him a bonus based on final League position. His successor, Roberto Donadoni, lifted Livorno up to ninth, and Colomba made his claim. Livorno refused, but now they have been ordered to pay up by the Italian federation. Next time they meet, Colomba clearly owes Donadoni a drink – at the least.

Jurgen KLINSMANN…
the Germany coach has warned the German media that anyone "breaching his family's privacy" will have federation and World Cup access cut off. Yet his family do not even live in Germany but in southern California. No point Klinsmann applying for the England job then.

OBITUARIES

Lajos BAROTI, 81, was the manager entrusted with picking up the pieces of the Hungarian national team after it fragmented following the crushing of the anti-Soviet uprising in 1956. Baroti guided Hungary to four World Cup finals tournaments (1958, 1962, 1966 and 1978) and to gold and bronze medals at the 1964 and 1960 Olympics respectively. He won two caps as a player in the 1930s and appeared for club sides Szeged and Gyor. Baroti went on to coach Gyor, Vasas, Ujpest, Wacker Innsbruck and Benfica.

Ted DITCHBURN, 84, was the son of a professional boxer and used his hands to constructive use as goalkeeper for Tottenham Hotspur's push-and-run team that won the Second Division and First Division championships in successive seasons under Arthur Rowe in 1950 and 1951. Ditchburn made a then club record 418 League appearances between 1939 and 1959, and won six caps for England. He was reserve to Wolves' Bert Williams at the 1950 World Cup finals in Brazil.

Tony BANKS, 62, the former Labour Sports Minister, was a controversial spearhead for England's vain bid to win hosting rights to the 2006 World Cup. His passion for football in general, and Chelsea in particular, was never in question, though he lacked an in-depth background in the murky world of international football politics. In the end, England's bid was sunk by German and South African PR and the hooliganism of English fans at Euro 2000. Banks had a pomposity-puncturing common touch and a far greater understanding of the concerns of the fan on the terrace than many a more "successful" sports administrator.

Common touch…Banks

WS WORLD SOCCER GLOBAL VIEW Paul Gardner

Blinded by science

Academics make hard work of stating the bleeding obvious

I SEE THE sociologists have been investigating football again. Or is it the anthropologists or the humanologists or the behaviourists?

I'm not sure that it makes much difference what these experts call themselves because their findings all tend to have a couple of things in common: either they're so blindingly obvious as to be merely laughable, or they're so abstruse as to be incomprehensible.

I'll admit that the second point could indicate nothing more than my own inability to understand deep thinking (try your luck with Clifford Geertz's *The Interpretation of Cultures* and the discussion of "deep play" therein).

But on the first point, the sheer absurdity of many of these expert observations, I'll stand no contradiction.

Going through his paces… Rafa Benitez

Here comes my main witness: Desmond Morris, world-famed as an ethnologist, zoologist and/or sociobiologist, author of the massively popular and influential *The Naked Ape*, which has sold over eight million copies. A man to be reckoned with in the scientific world.

Hilarious piffle

After men and apes, Dr Morris turned his formidable intellect to football and gave us *The Soccer Tribe*, a 320-page volume with lovely colour photos and charts and drawings…and a huge quantity of hilarious piffle.

Frankly, I still don't know whether Morris was having us all on or not. For instance, there's Chapter 22, The Triumph Displays, in which he describes the various ways in which players celebrate scoring. Being a scientist, Morris has to give everything a name, so he describes The Arms Aloft, The Leaping Fists Aloft, the Back Tilt, the Embrace Invitation and the Multiple Embrace. There's more. How about the Frontal Leap Cling? And how about the saucy-sounding Horizontal Embrace and the Rear Leap Cling?

There's no hint from Morris that any of this is supposed to be humorous, but it's difficult to imagine anyone writing that sort of thing with a straight face.

As for insights, how about "when overcome by dejection, players adopt a heads down posture"? That was Morris in 1981, making hard, but comical, work of the bleeding obvious.

'My main conclusion about these coaching clowns is that they should sit down and shut up'

Nothing seems to have changed. The academics are still with us, still pointing out the obvious. So we have Professor Geoffrie Beattie, who is Head of School and Dean of Psychological Sciences at Manchester University, contributing his thoughts on coaches. Like Morris, he's interested in body language and in the real (dare I say, "deep"?) meaning of what coaches are expressing with all their twitchings and cavortings on the sidelines.

That is a field of study in which I can claim some expertise, as I've been watching these coaching clowns for many years now, and I have formed some definite conclusions of my own, the main one being that they should sit down and shut up.

That's not very scientific, admittedly – so for more reasoned expertise, over to Professor Beattie: "In the critical moments before the match starts, the things I would be looking for would be strokes of the face. They are attempts to mimic the comfort you get from your mother as a child."

Hadn't thought of that, I must admit. Nor had I

Celebration analysis…Portugal demonstrate a Multiple Embrace with attempted Rear Leap Cling

considered that when Rafa Benitez "does a lot of pacing during matches…it brings his full body into operation as a signalling system, and…gives him a superior position to the rest of the bench – physically dominating them because he is standing and they are sitting."

I'll remember that next time some ignoramus on the train refuses to give up his seat for me. But I had thought the coach might be more concerned with what's in front of him, on the field, than what's behind him, no?

Ultimately, you realise, the Prof is saying that the coaches are all nervous. Bet you'd never thought of that. Benitez does a lot of pacing, Alex Ferguson swallows a lot, Arsene Wenger makes pointing and stabbing gestures, and Jose Mourinho goes in for lip-licking "which displays his nervousness and anxiety".

I have to say that Professor Beattie is not nearly so much fun as Dr Morris. The unconscious quirks of the coaches seem to me much less interesting than the obvious grandstanding. What, exactly, is the real meaning (the "deep" meaning, that is) of all the histrionics and the theatricality?

Playing to the gallery

Could it be that the coaches are merely playing to the gallery, trying to make sure they're noticed, that they come over well on TV? It makes for atrociously bad theatre (don't call us guys, we'll be in touch) and I wonder if it's any better as coaching.

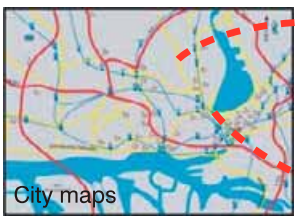
What these guys are doing – they don't know this, and nor does Professor Beattie – is Americanizing the game. Last word to another academic, John Dizikes, emeritus professor of American Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, who writes of a typically American figure: "The genius on the sidelines, the great American manager…who does the planning, plots the moves, moves the pieces, and fools the opposition." American culture, says Dizikes, "is rich with manipulative geniuses as heroes."

You know, I think Mourinho would quite like that title: manipulative genius.

Planning a trip to the World Cup?

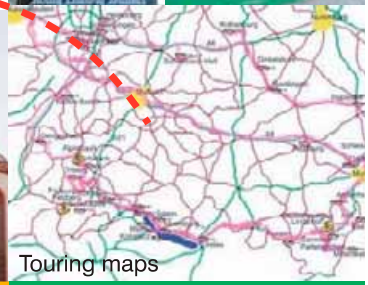
We've done the research for you!

Over 100 routes to stadium cities and places of interest
...by plane, train, coach and car
...and for the lowest cost


City maps

Over 700 of the best (and cheapest) places to stay
...and, we got their email addresses
...so you can book direct and save money

More than 1,000 photos of places to visit
...driving routes, sights, walks


Touring maps

www.footballtourist.com
It's all there and its all FREE.

Footballtourist.com
By the fans, for the fans

WS WORLD SOCCER HOME FRONT David Conn

All bunged up

Allegations of corruption at English clubs got lost in the furore over Sven Goran Eriksson's departure

What's the story…Eriksson arrives at FA headquarters to discuss his allegations of corruption in English football

THE TWICE-YEARLY agents' feeding frenzy, known officially as the transfer window, produced some great fallout this time. It was sparked by the Luton Town manager, Mike Newell, lashing out at the game's culture of bungs, saying he had been offered money by agents in return for signing their players.

The dramas that followed posed one bold question above all the others: is English football a serious business, a beautiful sport, which has to be cleaned up for all our sakes? Or an irretrievably decadent farce, which we should all just enjoy?

That question arose out of the latest fine mess Sven Goran Eriksson had got himself into. It ought to have been dynamite, really, for no less a figure than the England manager to say in Britain's largest circulation newspaper that football is corrupt. According to Eriksson, one very top manager is on the take, a senior Premiership club is riddled with corruption, and the manager of another struggling club has a taste for backhanders.

However, the gravity of these claims was undermined by the fact that Eriksson tossed them out as a bit of gossip while sipping champagne on a yacht, and trying to reel in some of the petro-dollars of an "Arab oil sheikh" considering giving the Swede a job once he'd left the FA.

We'd all like to think we'd see through the crude fancy dress of a disguised *News of the World* reporter, but maybe, with all the oligarchs, obscure Russian-Israelis, reclusive Americans and Thai Prime Ministers constantly circling Premiership clubs these days, Eriksson can be excused for believing the bloke in the keffiyah was really a foreign chequebook in search of a manager.

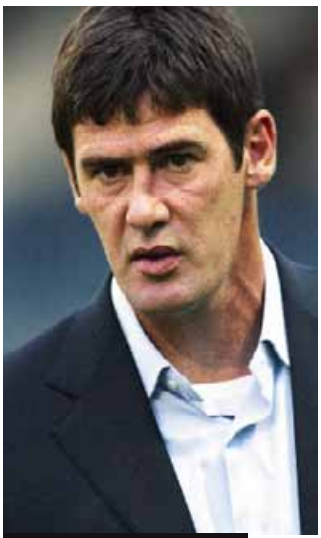
The outcome of the tabloid sting (well, so far at least; Eriksson is suing for breach of privacy – you couldn't make this up) was that the FA finally decided it had had enough. The Swede with the cultured specs and excitable libido will be gone, immediately after the World Cup, by mutual consent.

In the bluster about how exactly Eriksson's massive salary package is to be settled, we rather lost detail about what the FA is doing about his bungs allegations: has it asked him to provide evidence to back his remarkably casual claims?

Exasperation

Newell, who is relatively new and successful at management, had spat out his stories with the exasperation of a man relentlessly badgered by agents to sign their players. The former Blackburn forward told the media he would tell FA chief executive Brian Barwick the names of the agents who had offered him bungs, but also admitted he had nothing written down – nothing, apparently, solid enough to count as proof.

His claims were, however, supported by


Accusing agents…Mike Newell

another young manager, Ian Holloway, of Queen's Park Rangers. Holloway, an outspoken, passionate football man, said he too had been offered money by an agent to sign a player, without naming names.

Of all the endless talk, Holloway's comment to BBC Radio Five Live was perhaps the most telling. He said: "Mike Newell and I are new to management. We're still in love with the game, with the football side of things, but we've come into it and found that the business side is horrible."

Then, strangely enough, after Eriksson's indiscretions, the Premier League also announced an inquiry, but their tone, talking about "cleaning up perception", suggested they are setting out to prove the clubs are clean, and not to find the dirt.

"We do not believe people are in a position to make those statements [about the prevalence of bungs] as categorically as they do," said chief executive Richard Scudamore.

Some seriously jaded observers might remember we've been here before. The last Premier League bungs inquiry was launched on June 13, 1993, following a claim by Alan Sugar, then the chairman of Tottenham, that when his club was signing striker Teddy Sheringham from Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest, Spurs' manager, Terry Venables, said, almost in passing: "Cloughie likes a bung."

The inquiry, which then Premier League chief executive Rick Parry had promised would be completed in "double quick time", took nearly five years and was inconclusive. Parry and Robert Reid QC, the barrister appointed as an independent, did decide that Ronnie Fenton, Clough's assistant, had accepted £58,000 in cash from people involved in the Sheringham transfer in the car park of a motorway service station.

Clough, whose two European Cup wins with Forest arguably constitute English football's greatest managerial achievement, was charged with misconduct by the FA, but by then he had retired. When he died, in September 2004, it was not generally felt polite to spice the eulogies with memories of brown envelopes.

Tax haven

George Graham's case came up while the bungs inquiry was still in mid-flounder. The details repay another visit. The then Arsenal manager deposited into a trust in the offshore tax haven of Jersey no less than £425,000, given to him by Norwegian agent Rune Hauge after Graham signed two of Hauge's clients – midfielder John Jensen and full-back Pal Lydersen. Most remarkable is not that the FA banned Graham from management for only a year, or that Hauge is still a busy agent. It is that despite all the stories of bungs constantly washing over the English game, Graham, who led Arsenal to two League titles, is the only manager in living memory who has been caught at it.

In 2000, journalist Tom Bower sniffed a pile of scandal and embarked on a long look at the game. He was encouraged by other journalists to take on the rumours about bungs and spent almost two years investigating. Bower's book, *Broken Dreams*, is a useful review of the past bungs inquiry and a reminder of the number and scale of deals that some managers conducted through the Premier League boom years. But for all that effort, Bower was unable to prove that a single bung had been made.

Which brings us back to Newell. He had a swipe at journalists, saying we should be uncovering bungs and the fact we are not presumably means we can't be bothered. "It's not exactly Watergate," he said witheringly.

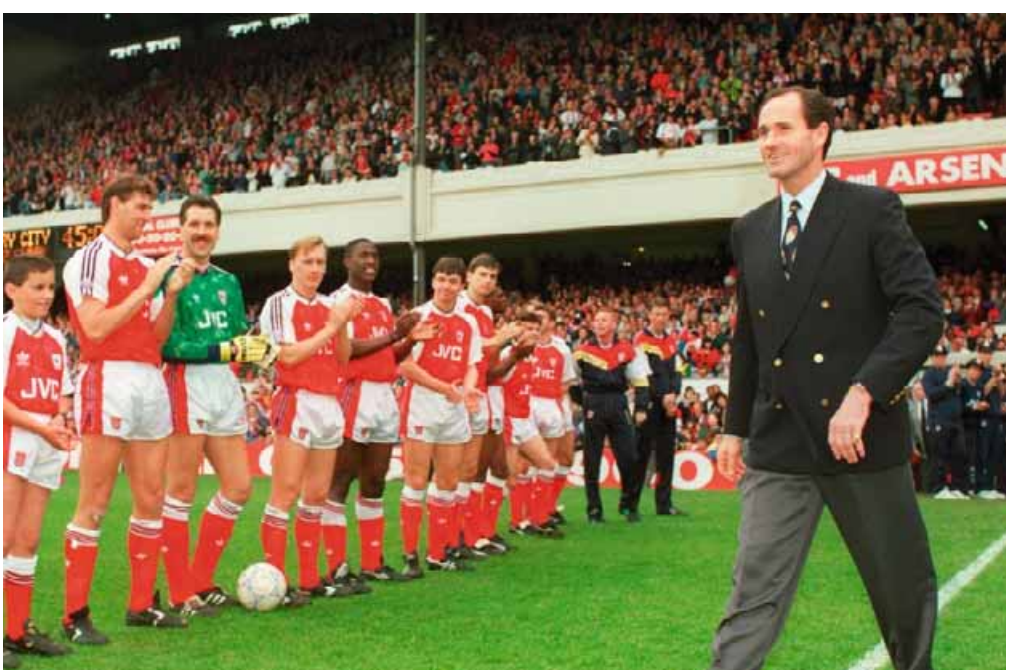
True enough, but without belittling the achievements of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, the journalists who broke the Watergate break-in story, they had a lucky break – a source from the inside who talked.

'We do not believe people are in a position to make these statements as categorically as they do'

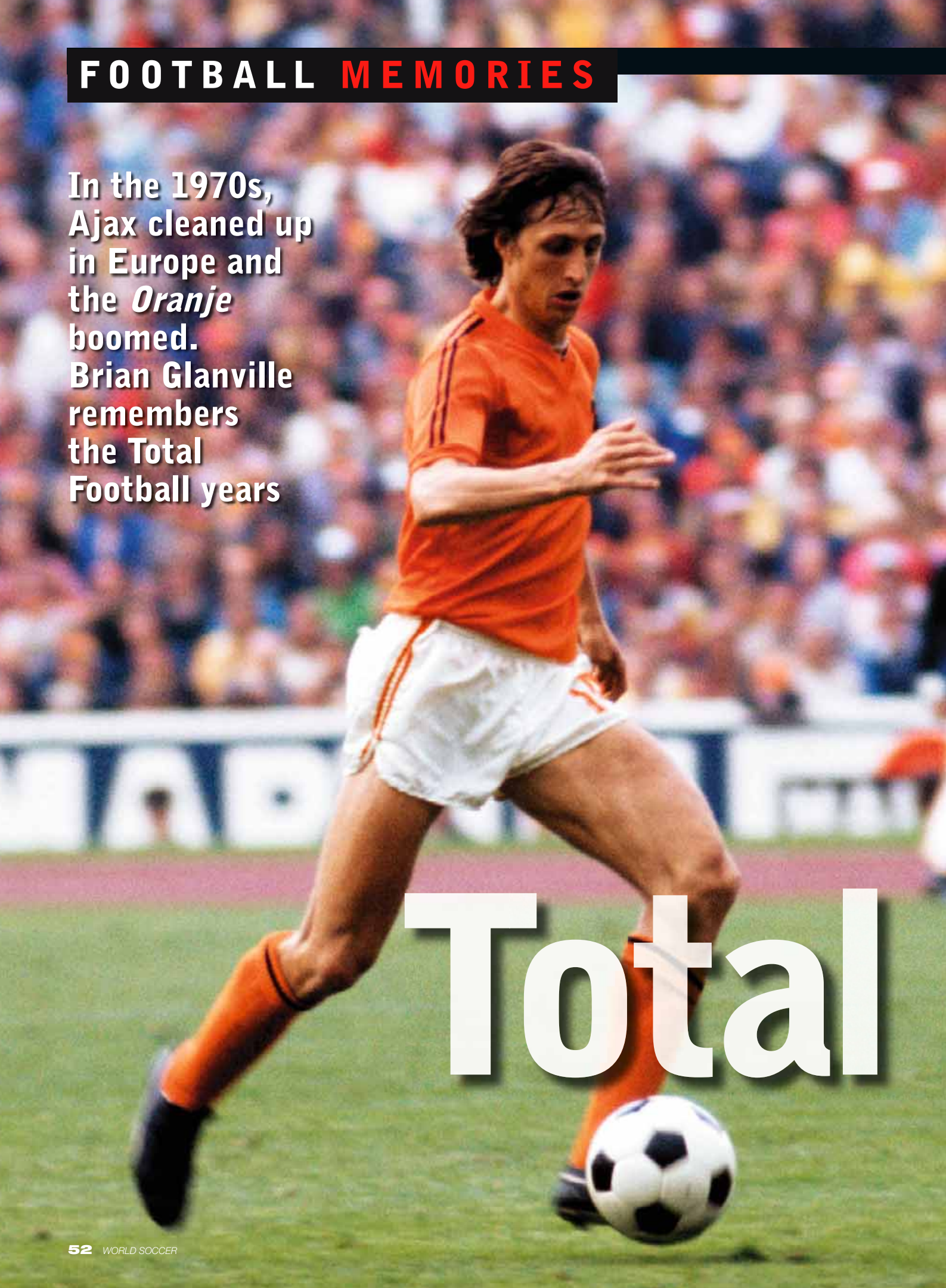
Premier League chief executive Richard Scudamore casts doubt on the bung allegations

Without information provided by people who have been party to some of this wrongdoing, English football journalists can only nibble round the edges of every rumour without finding out the truth.

If we are ever to reach the real truth, the game needs a Deep Throat, not an England manager on the make, chucking out tittle-tattle on a yacht in the hope of a payday.



Sweet and sour…Graham, who won two titles with Arsenal, is the only manager of modern times to have been found guilty of taking a bung



Total

In the 1970s, Ajax cleaned up in Europe and the *Oranje* boomed. Brian Glanville remembers the Total Football years

recall

YOU WOULD HAVE to describe Holland as the nearly team of the 1970s; runners-up in both the 1974 and 1978 World Cups, and arguably unlucky in both those Finals. They should surely have exploited the fact that they took an early lead against West Germany in Munich in the 1974 decider. They again faced the host nation in the 1978 Final, when they came within a whisker of beating Argentina in ordinary time, only to be brushed aside by the energy and thrust of Mario Kempes and company in extra-time. But the *Oranje* would surely have won had only Johan Cruyff been there.

Although dour, commanding coach Rinus Michels led Ajax to the first of their three consecutive European Cup triumphs in the early 1970s and came back from his spell at Barcelona to lick a mutinous Holland team into shape in the weeks before the 1974 finals, there is no doubt that neither Ajax nor Holland would have remotely been the same teams without the inspiration and the virtuosity of Cruyff. Total Football as such would have been impossible without him, just as it would have been impossible for West Germany and Bayern Munich without the inspiration of Franz Beckenbauer, who, as a teenager, had conceived the role of the attacking libero or sweeper.

The ethos of Total Football was essentially that anybody could do anything: defenders could attack, attackers could defend. And, indeed, when one remembers the powerful left-back Ruud Krol hitting the post from an outside-right position for Ajax in their 2-0 win against Inter in the 1972 European Cup Final in Rotterdam, you can see what was meant and sometimes achieved. By 1978, Krol had developed into an exceptional sweeper, and was a salient figure in that year's World Cup finals.

Oddly enough, the "fluidifying" sweeper in the Ajax team was a German, Horst Blankenburg. He played only as a substitute for right-sided midfielder Nico Rijnders in the 2-0 win against Panathinaikos in the 1971 European Cup Final at Wembley, but he would subsequently establish himself as a vital figure in the Ajax team. This, however, was hardly of use to Holland.

Main picture: Johan Cruyff and Franz Beckenbauer, two of the forces behind Total Football, come face to face in the 1974 World Cup Final. Above: Ajax win the European Cup in 1971

Cruyff himself had had a stormy start to his international career. He was sent off on his debut against Czechoslovakia after retaliating following a foul, earning himself a one-year ban from the severely moral if not moralistic Dutch federation.

Ajax had been the making of him. Cruyff's father had died when he was in his infancy; the club gave his mother a cleaning job, which was just about enough to keep body and soul together.

It took time for Cruyff and Ajax fully to get into gear. They reached the 1969 European Cup Final in Madrid but were swept aside by Milan, losing 4-1, three of the goals scored by lively left-winger Pierino Prati. Six of that Ajax team would play against Panathinaikos two years later as Ajax won their first European Cup. But the Amsterdammers hardly excelled that night against a somewhat pedestrian Greek team, playmaker Mimis Domazos apart. Cruyff, irrepressible in the first half, was time and again thwarted by fine goalkeeping. Arie Haan, destined to become such a force in midfield, came on as a substitute and scored the second goal with a deflected shot following a glorious run by Cruyff.

Talking tactics… Rinus Michels addresses the Holland squad

Ajax at their peak

Michels now took off to manage Barcelona and would, in 1973, take Cruyff to follow him. It may have been the coach who brought order out of chaos for the 1974 international team, but, arguably, Ajax reached their peak after he had left and the more permissive, less authoritarian Stefan Kovacs had taken over. Under the less constricting regime of the little Romanian, Cruyff and company were able to practise their preferred adventurous, attacking, multi-purpose game. But it was Michels who made progress in the World Cup finals possible. A benevolent dictator had become essential.

Given the brilliance of the Holland team in the West Germany World Cup, it tends to be forgotten that they had anything but an easy passage to the finals. They were held to goalless draws at home and away by neighbours and rivals Belgium, and had the psychological disadvantage of having failed to qualify for a World Cup finals since 1938 or get beyond their qualifying group in the 1972 European Championship.

Having got to the finals, there was dissent in the ranks. One of the major causes was money. The team made increasing, even excessive, demands, up to the point when an exasperated Michels announced that any player who rejected what had finally been offered could pack his cases and go home. But having obtained hugely lucrative terms, the Dutch players, almost on the eve of the competition, were still threatening to go on strike.

The other *casus belli* was the tensions between players from rival big clubs Ajax and Feyenoord. Ajax had won the European Cup for the past three years – the most recent by beating Juventus 1-0 in the 1973 Final in Belgrade – but in 1970 Feyenoord had become the first Dutch team to take the trophy when defeating Celtic 2-1 in Milan.

Wim Van Hanegem was one of the victorious Feyenoord players in the 1974 Holland squad. Before the 1970 Final, Celtic manager Jock Stein had somewhat arrogantly and dangerously described him as "a slow Jim Baxter", referring to the technically adroit left-half who for some years graced the Rangers and Scotland teams. But if Van Hanegem was hardly the fastest thing on two legs, his football brain moved with exceptional speed. He was strongly built, a firm tackler, had excellent control, struck the ball hard and true, and above all passed it with accuracy. In my view, he was the best of all the Dutch players, not excluding Cruyff, in the 1974 World Cup Final.

For all the dissension in the Dutch ranks, they had shown their huge capacities with a 4-1 win in a friendly against Argentina just before the finals. But by the time the tournament arrived, they had lost key players. First-choice goalkeeper Jan Van Beveren was injured and did not make the squad. His deputy, Piet Schrijvers, was then also injured, so Michels turned to 33-year-old veteran Jan Jongbloed, who had been so convinced that he would see no action that he had actually brought his fishing rods to Germany!

Jongbloed was known as an adventurous, even at times a reckless, keeper, with his forays beyond the penalty area, but in the event that proved exactly what the team would need. This was because the absence of another key man, Ajax centre-back Barry Hulshoff, had substantially weakened the defence, which tended to rely on what was a fragile offside trap. In effect, Jongbloed became a goalkeeping sweeper.

'Van Hanegem was the best Holland player in the 1974 Final'

The absence of Hulshoff meant Haan, almost as powerfully propulsive as Johan Neeskens in midfield, was obliged to function at least nominally as sweeper, though in effect he proved more of a centre-back, always eager to go forward when he could, as were the full-backs, Krol and Wim Suurbier. Neeskens had been used at right-back in Ajax's 1971 European Cup Final victory, but he was also a true all-round midfielder, equally effective in attacking or defensive mode.

Another important absentee through injury was left-sided midfielder Gerry Muhren, and while the regular outside-left, Piet Keizer, was included in the squad, he lost his starting place – apart from in the group game against Sweden – to the fresher legs of Rob Rensenbrink.

Under-strength Holland

So, without saying that this was a patchwork Holland side, it was well below its full strength and greatly dependent on the dazzling combinations of the magisterial Cruyff and his chief lieutenant, Neeskens.

Although the Dutch essentially relied on speed, skill and tactical flair, they could, in the vernacular, look after themselves. They needed to do so in their opening game, against the bruising Uruguayans in Hanover. Rensenbrink was punched in the stomach by the ruthless Julio Montero-Castillo, who was sent off. But a worse offender still was Pablo Forlan, the father of current Villarreal forward Diego Forlan, who kicked Neeskens in the head within the first few minutes and was booked for a bad foul on Krol in the second half. Indeed, Uruguay had little to offer but ill-tempered violence, and were easily beaten 2-0. All the South Americans' cynical ploys could not subdue Cruyff, who yet again showed how quickly he saw things, how fast he was off the mark.

Next came Sweden, who were much more difficult opponents. They had a

Left: Arie Haan evades Italy's Roberto Bettega and Gaetano Scirea at the 1978 finals. Above: the starting line-up in the Final against Argentina. Below left: Mario Kempes puts the hosts 2-1 ahead

formidable strike force in the tall, slender Ralf Edstrom, who had good aerial ability, and the skilful Roland Sandberg. And with Ronnie Hellstrom so agile in goal, Holland had to be content with a 0-0 draw.

In contrast, the Dutch overran Bulgaria, their last group opponents. Cruyff was a whirlwind of pace, finesse and invention, and the Bulgarians could do nothing about it. Two of Holland's goals in the 4-1 win were from penalties by Neeskens, who was for ever breaking forcefully into attack.

With their habitual perversity, FIFA's World Cup committee had devised still another half-baked scheme. In this tournament, there would be no knockout stages; instead, the two qualifiers from each of the four groups would go into two further groups of four teams, the winners of which would meet in the Final.

Holland by now had the wind splendidly in their sails. The only real danger seemed to be Brazil, who, though a parody of the dazzling side that had won the 1970 tournament, could still, with Roberto Rivelino their mentor, give opponents a run for their money. Even if that entailed some bruising methods.

In their opening second group stage game, Holland outplayed Argentina, whose sheer frustration was shown by an appalling foul on Neeskens by defender Roberto Perfumo. It availed them nothing. They lost 4-0 and the defeat would probably have been even worse had it not been for the heavy rain falling in the second half. Cruyff was once again irresistible. He scored twice and set up another for forward Johnny Rep.

East Germany, who seemed to have run out of steam since their surprising first group stage win against their West German neighbours, decided to man-mark Cruyff with Konrad Weise. But Holland had other shots in their locker. On nine minutes, Rensenbrink set up a goal for Neeskens, then scored one himself.

The victory left Holland to meet Brazil, who had also won their first two games, in what was effectively a semi-final. It took place in heavy rain, again, in Dortmund, and was notable for the violence of the baffled Brazilians, and the glorious combinations between Cruyff and Neeskens.

From the very beginning the Brazil defence kicked, chopped and hacked in their desperate attempts to contain their superior opponents. Neeskens was knocked out by Marinho Peres in the first half, but lax German referee Kurt Tschenscher saw no evil. However, he sent off dominating centre-back Luis Pereira in the second half after he scythed down Neeskens, once again the victim.

The Dutch were hardly passive, eventually retaliating in kind. As for the football, their vulnerable offside trap could well have betrayed them on at least two occasions, but Brazil wingers Paulo Cesar Carpegiani and Jairzinho failed when they should have scored.

Beating Brazil

An unpleasant match was redeemed by the two Dutch second-half goals. The first, just after half-time, was a small miracle of speed and economy. Dashing through the centre, Neeskens found Cruyff on the right, then lobbed the swift, precise return cleverly over keeper Leao. Then, in the 65th minute, Cruyff converted a left-wing cross from Krol with a spectacular volley.

So there would be what might be seen as the ideal Final between the practitioners of Total Football, Holland and West Germany; Beckenbauer against Cruyff.

Many observers felt that to win the Final, the Dutch would have to score at least three goals, such were the deficiencies of their defence and the abilities of the prolific German striker Gerd Muller. Though Muller was slightly beyond his best, he was still a formidable finisher in and around the box, and he would, in the event, exploit the weakness of the Dutch offside trap, even if the legitimate goal he scored would be disallowed by English referee Jack Taylor, who later confessed he had got it wrong.

No World Cup Final has had such a sensational beginning. The Dutch kicked off and almost casually, to the whistling of an offended crowd, played the ball about. Then suddenly Cruyff, who had dropped behind the front line, was away on a mesmerising solo run. He swept past his marker, Berti Vogts, with absolute ease and carried on into the penalty area, where he was brought down by a desperate Uli Hoeness. It was a forward's attempt at a tackle, you might say, since Hoeness was nominally the

Hat-trick man… Rob Rensenbrink put Iran to the sword in Holland's first game at the 1978 finals

outside-right. Neeskens drove the resulting penalty-kick past Sepp Maier.

And that should have been that. For the next 25 minutes or so, the Dutch tormented a plainly demoralised German team rather like picadors with a bull. There were those who suggested the Dutch not only wanted to defeat the Germans but to humiliate them because of the bitter memories of the Nazi occupation of Holland. You might have thought that the best way to do that was surely to score more goals rather than to toy with the opposition. In the event, no more Dutch goals would come.

The tide turned midway through the first half when West Germany scored, also from the penalty spot. The kick, awarded after left-winger Bernd Holzenbein had been tripped in the box by Wim Jansen, was converted by left-back Paul Breitner.

Germany on top

After the equaliser, Germany's spirits rose, their morale was restored, and they gave as good and better than they got. Vogts even abandoned Cruyff to send in a drive that forced a save from Jongbloed. Hoeness, full of clever running, beat defender Suurbier and rolled the ball past Jongbloed, only for the resilient Wim Rijsbergen to clear off the line. The keeper then did well to claw a lobbed free-kick by Beckenbauer over the bar.

Holland missed their chance to go ahead again, presented to them after the somewhat over-exuberant Germans left gaps in their defence. A long ball from the superb Van Hanegem found Cruyff, who ended his run with a perfect, selfless pass to Rep, on his left. But although Rep got his shot away, it was straight at Maier.

So on 43 minutes, the Germans scored what proved to be the winner. Right-winger Jurgen Grabowski launched Rainer Bonhof down the right, where he surged past Haan and put in a low cross. The lethal Muller pulled the ball back with one foot and swept it past Jongbloed with the other.

At half-time, Holland were obliged to substitute Rensenbrink, who had pulled a muscle, with Rene Van de Kerkhof. The new arrival would so nearly fashion an equaliser when his high cross looped over the German defence, to be met fiercely on the volley by Neeskens at the far post. But, alas for Holland, the shot went into the side-netting.

Early lead…Sepp Maier dives in vain as Johan Neeskens puts Holland ahead from the spot in the 1974 Final

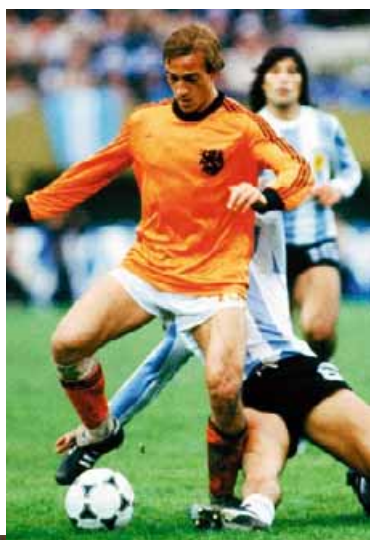
Holland also had to substitute Rijsbergen with Theo De Jong. Jansen took over the marking of Muller and was lucky not to concede another penalty, when he brought down Holzenbein again. The Germans had also been denied when Muller's "offside" goal was ruled out. But no matter, the World Cup was the hosts'.

Had Holland paid for their early hubris? All the skills and strategy of the admirable Van de Kerkhof and the virtuosity of Cruyff were not enough to save them.

During the tournament, the Dutch had been based at Hiltrup, just over the border in northern Germany. It could be claimed that an incident in the swimming pool at the squad's hotel ultimately decided the outcome of the 1978 World Cup. One night, Cruyff and some of the other players went "skinny-dipping" with a few young German girls, unaware that swimming with them was a German reporter, who promptly betrayed them in his newspaper. "Are you mad?" Cruyff was reported furiously to have demanded of him. The rumour was that Danny, Cruyff's wife, consequently put her foot down; he must not compete in the next World Cup finals. Nor, alas, did he.

He did, however, take part in four of Holland's six qualifying games, scoring against Northern Ireland in Rotterdam and Belgium in Antwerp. The first of these games was a severe embarrassment to the Dutch since they were held to a 2-2 draw by a gallant Irish team. However, Belgium were beaten home and away this time, unlike in the qualifiers for 1974.

'For 25 minutes, the Dutch tormented a demoralised Germany'



Left: Rene Van de Kerkhof vies with Argentina captain Daniel Passarella in the 1978 Final. Above left: Neeskens rides a tackle in the same game

Holland's manager for the Argentina World Cup was another "part-time" choice and a much more surprising one – Austrian Ernst Happel, once a star defender for his country, a former manager of Feyenoord and at the time of the finals in charge of Club Brugge. In Argentina, Happel was at odds with his predecessor and now assistant coach, Jan Zwartkruis. Zwartkruis accused the somewhat dour Austrian of "treating his men as footballers, rather than human beings". Certainly, there was restlessness in the Dutch camp, not least in the case of Jongbloed, now 37. The keeper

was casually told he would be dropped after Holland had lost to Scotland in their final first group stage game and had to restrain his wife from bearding Happel in his den.

The coach's lack of tact was arguably responsible for the absence of the magisterial Van Hanegem. Now 34 but still plainly functional, Van Hanegem had played as the central figure in a five-man "X" formation in midfield in a friendly against Austria in Vienna just before the finals; after which Happel gratuitously told him he could not be promised a starting place in Argentina. So Van Hanegem withdrew.

Van de Kerkhof double act

Other absentees would be keeper Van Beveren, again, Hugo Hovenkamp, a lively overlapping left-back who made the squad but was injured before the finals kicked off, and incisive Ajax centre-forward Ruud Geels. By way of compensation, Willy Van de Kerkhof had established himself in the side, alongside twin Rene.

In the first game at the finals, a Rensenbrink hat-trick brought Holland a comfortable 3-0 win against feeble Iran in Mendoza, the venue for all their first group stage matches. But after that, Holland had a far from easy passage into the next round. Peru held them to a goalless draw in the second match, after which Happel dropped Haan for the third game, against Scotland, but picked Neeskens, known to be injured and forced to be substituted.

Holland could afford to lose against the Scots and still go through as long as they limited the margin of defeat to two goals (and assuming that Peru did not lose heavily to Iran). Asked whether he thought Scotland could score the three goals they needed, Jongbloed whimsically replied: "Yes, but not in 90 minutes!"

He was wrong. Scotland did indeed score three times, the third of them from little Archie Gemmill's superlative solo run. But the Dutch hit two in reply to qualify for the second group stage on goal difference.

Holland now came glitteringly to life, thrashing Austria 5-1 in their opening second pool match on the superior pitch at Cordoba. There were excellent performances from two newcomers – Piet Wildschut in midfield and lanky young centre-back Ernie Brandts, who headed the opening goal after five minutes. Rensenbrink was another outstanding player, making two of the goals and scoring from a penalty.

The next game, a 2-2 draw against West Germany, again in Cordoba, was one of the finest of the tournament. Little German right-winger Rudi Abramczik opened the scoring after just three minutes, with a brave, diving header. Haan equalised shortly afterwards with a 35-yard shot. Big centre-forward Dieter Muller put Germany ahead again on 70 minutes, but Rene Van de Kerkhof equalised on 83.

Next came a waning Italian team in Buenos Aires, where the versatile Neeskens returned to play at centre-back in front of Krol, the majestic sweeper and skipper. Brandts put through his own goal on 19 minutes, but equalised with a swing of his right foot on 50. "What luck!" remarked Italy's Claudio Gentile. "He was in the middle of three of us and shot with his head down. He didn't even look up!" Adding insult to injury, Haan's 30-yard drive beat Dino Zoff to win the game.

So the Final in Buenos Aires would be between Holland and the hosts, who had been favoured by referees earlier in the competition and would be so again.

The kick-off was delayed when Argentina's Ossie Ardiles protested about the light bandage Rene Van de Kerkhof was wearing round his wrist. Italian referee Sergio Gonella upheld the protest, ushering Van de Kerkhof to leave the field, but when he returned he had simply covered one bandage with another. Besides that, the Argentinians had taken the field five minutes late, an act of pure gamesmanship.

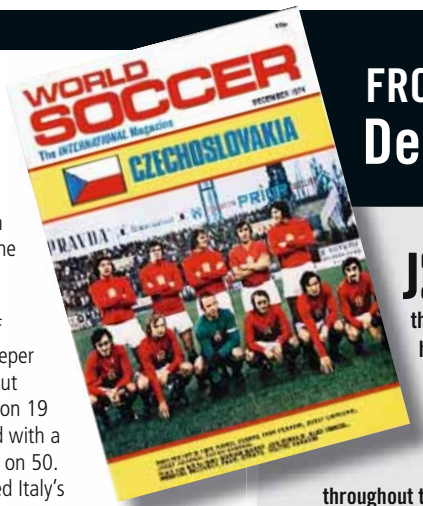
The Dutch marked man to man, the Argentinians zonally; neither defence had looked watertight. An angry Dutch team committed the first of 50 fouls in the opening minute. The scene was set.

Kempes scores his first

In the first half, Argentina captain Daniel Passarella had four good attempts on goal, three of them saved by Jongbloed, back in the side because his replacement, Schrijvers, had injured a knee against Italy. At the other end, Argentina keeper Ubaldo Fillol thwarted Rep and Rensenbrink. The one goal of the half was scored by Mario Kempes' formidable left foot, on 38 minutes. Served by Leopoldo Luque, he rode Haan's tackle and went on to beat Jongbloed.

On 59 minutes, Happel put on tall Dirk Nanninga for Rep, whom he didn't admire. Later he moved Brandts into attack. When Rene Van de Kerkhof eluded Alberto Tarantini to cross, Nanninga soared to equalise. In the last minute, the mighty Krol sent Rensenbrink through, but his shot hit a post; and there was extra-time.

Who knows from where a seemingly flagging Argentina found new energy? After 14 minutes, Kempes forced his way through again and made it 2-1. In the final 15 minutes the Dutch desperately threw players into attack, inevitably leaving gaps at the back. Another superb burst by Kempes, abetted by right-winger Daniel Bertoni, ended with Bertoni beating Jongbloed. 3-1. All credit to Kempes. But if only Cruyff had played.



FROM THE ARCHIVES
December 1974

JOHAN CRUYFF, the brilliant Dutch captain generally considered to be the world's top player, is certainly the highest paid. His lifestyle in Spain, since his transfer from Ajax, reflects how much Cruyff can enjoy the fruits of his profession.

In an era when transfer fees throughout the world of football have reached ridiculously inflated proportions, Cruyff can at least argue that Barcelona have got value for their money. Attendances for home matches have rocketed to new levels and the winning of the championship last season was, to a large extent, attributed to the arrival of Cruyff.

Cruyff, it is said, is a dollar millionaire. He recently bought another house in a mountainous region some 30 miles from Barcelona. The land was sold to him by Senor Carabin, the secretary of Barcelona, who has a Dutch wife. Cruyff paid only half the market price. Among his neighbours are Senor Carabin himself, Barcelona coach Rinus Michels and Johan Neeskens, the second Barcelona player to follow the golden trail from Amsterdam.

The house has a swimming pool and a tennis court. A riding school is situated only 100 yards from the house. Cruyff owns a horse and, when he can find the time, goes riding with his wife, Danny.

Cruyff is away from home for about four days a week. Then, Danny is alone with her three children – Chantal, Susila and baby boy Jordi. Both little girls speak fluent Spanish…better than Johan, who had an intensive course to learn the language.

When not training or playing, Cruyff is busy promoting his business interests, which range from car paint to cookies. His father-in-law, Cor Coster, is his manager. The rights of a book – still to be written – have already been sold.

Cruyff drives a Citroen Maserati, valued at 15,000 dollars, but that did not cost him much as he is promoting that car as well.

JOHAN CRUYFF

SUBSCRIBE AND GET THE EURO

SEND THIS COUPON TO:

UK World Soccer Subscriptions, FREEPOST CY1061, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3BR

OVERSEAS World Soccer Subscriptions, PO Box 272, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, UK, RH16 3FS (please attach correct postage)

USA World Soccer Subscriptions, c/o Mercury International, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001 (please attach correct postage)

I WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE

☐ UK 6 monthly Direct Debit £17.15 (save 20%)
☐ UK 1 year £36.45 (save 15%)
☐ UK 2 years £68.65 (save 20%)

☐ USA 1 year $83.25 (save $27.75)
☐ USA 2 years $155.40 (save $66.60)

☐ Europe 1 year €64.80 (save €16.20)
☐ Europe 2 years €113.40 (save €48.60)

☐ Rest of World 1 year £56.00 (save £14.00)
☐ Rest of World 2 years £98.00 (save £42.00)

PLUS RECEIVE MY FREE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL BOOK WORTH £29

YOUR DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss: Forename:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode/Zip code:

Country/State

Home tel. no.
(inc. country/area code):

If you would like to receive emails from World Soccer and IPC containing news, special offers and product and service information and take part in our magazine research via email, please include your email below.

Email:

Date of birth: D D M M Y Y Y Y

PAYMENT DETAILS

I enclose cheque/international money order for £/€/$_____made payable to IPC Media Ltd.

Or please debit my ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Switch/Maestro (UK only)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐ Switch only

Expiry date: / / / Switch Card issue no / Start date ☐☐☐☐

Signature: (I am over 18)

INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

Originator's reference
764 221

Account no: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Account Name:

Name of Bank:

Address:

Postcode:

Account no: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Sort code: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Signature: Date:
(I am over 18)

This offer is only open to new subscribers. *Gift only available to new UK subscribers. The £17.15 offer is only available by Direct Debit for UK subscribers. The closing date for this offer is 31st March 2006. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue, eight weeks for overseas. Your free gift will be delivered separately within 28 days and is subject to availability. **For enquiries and overseas rates please call +44 (0)845 676 7778, fax +44 (0)1444 445 599, or email: ipcsubs@qss-uk.com.** World Soccer, published by IPC Media Ltd (IPC), will collect your personal information to process your order. World Soccer and IPC would like to contact you by post or telephone to promote and ask your opinion on our magazines and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to hear from us. ☐ IPC may occasionally pass your details to carefully selected organisations so they can contact you by telephone or post with regards to promoting and researching their products and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to be contacted. ☐

48Q

Join the World Cup countdown. All the essential news and results – only in World Soccer

- Join the most knowledgeable people in football
- Save money off the newstand price
- Delivered direct to your door wherever you live in the world

The Direct Debit Guarantee: This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society. If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change, IPC Media Ltd. will notify you at least ten days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If an error is made by IPC Media Ltd. or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of the letter to us. Direct Debits can ONLY be paid through a Bank or Building Society. Your Direct Debit price will stay the same for one year from start date.

Fanatical about UK football too?

Check out a subscription to Shoot and save £££s. www.shoot.co.uk/ishx

PEAN BOOK OF FOOTBALL FREE

FREE

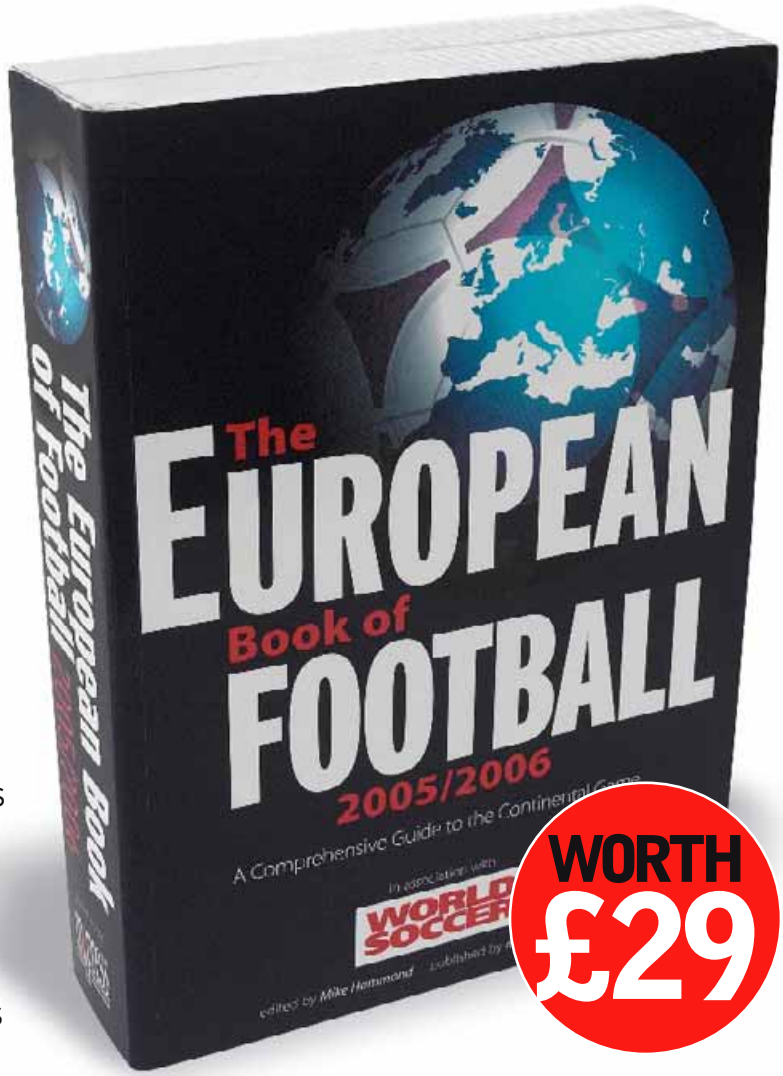
PLUS SAVE UP TO 20%

WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE TO WORLD SOCCER

The European Book of Football is your comprehensive guide to the continental game and features a whole season of European football recorded and reviewed in exclusive and exhaustive detail.

- Complete coverage of all 52 European countries and their top-division clubs
- National team results and player appearances
- Champions League and UEFA Cup line-ups
- League results, scorers, player appearances, tables and domestic cups

PLUS the top 100 players of the season, including profiles, pictures and career records



WORTH £29

Order online

www.worldsoccer.com/iwsbc

Gifts are not available online

Order hotline

+44(0)845 676 7778

LINES OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK, 9am-9pm UK Time.
QUOTE CODE 48Q
USA call toll free on 1-888 313-5528 (lines open Mon-Fri 9am-1pm EST)

GERMANY

Ailton bursts back

FOOTBALL JOURNALISTS in these parts will have no shortage of material now that ever-controversial Brazilian Ailton is back in the Bundesliga. The prolific striker has joined Hamburg after a stormy 187 days in Istanbul with Besiktas and life is never calm when he is about.

Headstrong, opinionated and the supreme egotist, Germany's Player of the Year for 2004 has made it a matter of principle to clash with management and coaches wherever he has played in Europe (his other clubs have been Werder Bremen and Schalke). There is no reason to suspect he will mellow at Hamburg, who see him as a straight replacement for another ill-disciplined character, Qatar-bound Belgian Emile Mpenza.

The Champions League-chasing northerners are taking a gamble. They know Ailton can be a disruptive influence and is prone to prolonged periods of moody ineffectiveness on the pitch. But they are equally aware of his remarkable goalscoring record in the Bundesliga (102 in 198 games, though he failed to get off the mark on his Hamburg debut, a 2-1 defeat at Nurnberg). A few capricious moments from the 32-year-old could be a price worth paying if he scores the goals that take them into the Champions League.

"I'm convinced Ailton will be a big help to us," said Hamburg coach Thomas Doll. "He's coming into a well-organised side that is doing well. The framework is in place for him to perform as he can. He will be welcomed with open arms by the squad, and if you go beyond the stereotype, you find he's a good guy."

Others might beg to differ, especially Besiktas, whom he joined for £2.1million last summer from Schalke. Lack of fitness and constant complaints about his lot swiftly alienated him. New Besiktas boss Jean Tigana almost carried his bags to the taxi when Hamburg director of sport Dietmar Beiersdorfer called.

"Too old and too difficult," was Tigana's verdict. "He was a dangerous front-runner and has scored some great goals. But yesterday is yesterday."

Unhappy return…Ailton gets short shrift from Nurnberg's Dominik Reinhardt on his debut for Hamburg, a 2-1 defeat

St Pauli dream

Hamburg's other club, Third Division St Pauli, have been living the dream and making headlines of their own courtesy of a 3-1 victory at home to high-flying Werder Bremen in the German Cup quarter-finals. Werder should have known it was not to be their night when referee Dr Felix Brych surprisingly declared a frozen, snow-covered pitch fit for play. The Bundesliga side's short-passing game was negated and they were simply overrun and outfought.

Werder general manager Klaus Allofs promised an official protest about the conditions, saying: "It was a sheer lottery." Who could blame him? His team had not only lost face but also Germany striker Miroslav Klose, who dislocated a shoulder in a fall and is likely to be out for three months.

"It went like a dream," gushed St Pauli midfielder Timo Schultz, scorer of their third goal. "All the Bremen players are battling to be included in the World Cup squads of various nations. We, on the other hand, are only fighting for a bigger allocation of match tickets. We believed. We told ourselves that just like us, our opponents only had two legs."

Nick Bidwell

Monaco – Italian outpost

DESPITE LANGUISHING in mid-table obscurity, Monaco have been grabbing the headlines in France of late – at least those that haven't been nicked by Jean-Jacques Eydelie's drug-related revelations (see Headliners, page 6, and Inside Soccer, page 44).

The overall French transfer market was quiet during January. Champions and runaway leaders Lyon re-signed Patrick Muller from Swiss club Basle, while the normally wheeling-and-dealing Marseille also made just one high-profile addition to their squad, Strasbourg striker Mickael Pagis.

But there was a frenzy of comings and goings at Monaco, as Italian coach Francesco Guidolin continued to reshape the team he inherited from Didier Deschamps in October. Heading out of the door to England were one-time key players Patrice Evra (to Manchester United) and Emmanuel Adebayor (Arsenal), and there were no tears shed by either.

"Monaco didn't respect my position," said defender Evra. "I was told I had two years left on my contract, so I couldn't start talking about leaving. But eventually they realised you can't keep a player against his will."

Adebayor, the highly-rated Togolese striker, claimed he had been forced out, despite having signed a contract until 2009 as recently as August. "Right from the start I felt things wouldn't go well between myself and Guidolin," said the 22-year-old. "But I was happy to come back after the African Nations Cup and get on with things until the end of the season. It was clear that wasn't what the management wanted, though, and that was when I realised I had to go."

Although Marseille, Tottenham and West Ham were all keen to take on Adebayor, Arsenal won the signature. "Arsenal were always my priority," he insisted. "I can't think of a better place to further my career."

Meanwhile, Monaco is looking even more like Little Italy, Guidolin having brought in high-profile but underachieving compatriots Christian Vieri (from Milan) and Marco Di Vaio (on loan from Valencia) to keep fellow Italian keeper Flavio Roma company. The coach also has three compatriots on his backroom staff – goalkeeping coach Lorenzo Di Iorio and conditioning coaches Adelio Diamante and Antonio Pintus.

Motivation factor

Questions have been asked about the motivation of the new arrivals and whether they might just be seeing it as a well-paid jolly. Vieri is on £2.7million for an 18-month contract, while Di Vaio's combination of salary and loan fee to Valencia amounts to £1.3m for six months' work. And despite the pair's protestations that they are really up for the challenge, results since their arrival have been an absolute disaster – two draws and two defeats in the League and elimination from the French Cup by lower league Colmar.

Guidolin has made it clear that he sees little future at the club for national team midfielders Olivier Kapo and Camel Meriem, both signed by Deschamps last summer. And with France defender Sebastien Squillaci going public over his desire to get away, too, it seems the turbulent times in the Principality are far from over.

Howard Johnson

Up for the challenge?...Vieri and Di Vaio have hardly shone since becoming the latest Italian recruits at Monaco

HOLLAND

Slammed door reopens for Van Hooijdonk

PIERRE VAN HOOIJDONK'S return to Feyenoord from NAC Breda was the most remarkable move in the January transfer market in Holland, considering he left the Rotterdam club in high dudgeon two and a half years ago.

Van Hooijdonk slammed the door behind him on his way to join Fenerbahce after Feyenoord turned down his request for an improved contract in recognition of the crucial part he played in their 2002 UEFA Cup triumph.

The controversial former national team striker helped Fener to the League title in his first season in Turkey, but spent most of the next term on the bench following a dispute with coach Christoph Daum. Last summer, Van Hooijdonk rejoined NAC, his boyhood club and coached by his friend Ton Lokhoff. However, Lokhoff was fired after a poor run of results and his successor, Cees Lok, told Van Hooijdonk he would not be using him in many games.

The 36-year-old is unlikely to be a first choice at Feyenoord, either, but will allow coach Erwin Koeman to rest regular strikers Dirk Kuijt and Salomon Kalou.

Koeman, meanwhile, has had a clear-out, overseeing the departures of Shinji Ono (to former club Urawa Reds), Alexander Ostlund (Southampton), Cory Gibbs (Den Haag), Hossam Ghaly (Tottenham), Karim Saidi (Lecce) and Leonardo (NAC).

Ajax took a major step in rebuilding when lining up Milan defender Jaap Stam and AZ midfielder Kenneth Perez for next season. Meanwhile, Nigel De Jong has joined former team-mate Rafael Van der Vaart at Hamburg, Julien Escude – captain at the start of the season – is now at Sevilla, keeper Bogdan Lobont has moved to Fiorentina, and Brazilian defender Maxwell is at Empoli until the end of the season, when he will join Internazionale.

Heerenveen lost striker Giorgios Samaras to Manchester City but brought in Mark De Vries from Leicester. Australian Archie Thompson has joined his national team boss Guus Hiddink at PSV from Melbourne Victory, while German club Wolfsburg have signed Rick Hoogendorp (RKC Waalwijk) and Tommie Van der Leegte (Den Haag).

Robert Maaskant has taken the reins at bottom club RBC Roosendaal for the third time, succeeding the sacked Dolf Roks. Maaskant was himself fired by Willem II earlier this season.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

I'm back…Van Hooijdonk shows off his shirt as he rejoins Feyenoord

SWITZERLAND

Basle lose two to France

Champions and leaders Basle lost two players to the French League during the winter break, with national team defender Patrick Muller going back to Lyon, where he won three League titles, and Argentinian forward Julio Hernan Rossi joining Nantes.

Rossi's compatriot, Mathias Delgado, had his contract extended to 2008 in recognition of his 12 goals during the autumn. "It was extremely important we keep him after we lost Christian Gimenez to Marseille [last August] and now Rossi," said vice-president Gigi Oeri.

Meanwhile, Grasshopper captain and midfielder Ricardo Cabanas has followed coach Hanspeter Latour to Bundesliga side Koln. Latour's replacement is former Bulgaria playmaker Krassimir Balakov, who has been assistant coach at Stuttgart for two seasons.

Ivar von Rulach

PORTUGAL

Liedson ends Benfica's run

Benfica's seven-match winning streak came to a dramatic end as they lost 3-1 at home to Lisbon rivals Sporting. Simao Sabrosa put the defending champions ahead but Sporting roared back with Liedson the star of the show, scoring twice in nine minutes to put the game out of Benfica's reach. Sporting thus completed the League double over the Eagles, having won 2-1 at home last September.

The result benefited leaders FC Porto, who went four points clear of Benfica after a 0-0 draw at Rio Ave. However, their performance annoyed the fans, a group of whom threw stones at coach Co Adriaanse's car as he tried to leave the club's training centre later that evening. The Dutchman escaped unhurt, although the car's back window was shattered.

One of the supporters' beefs was that Adriaanse had left popular keeper Vitor Baia out of the starting line-up for the second match running. And that came shortly after another fan favourite, captain Jorge Costa, was sold to Standard Liege.

Vitoria Guimaraes signed five players before the winter transfer deadline in a bid to escape relegation. The northerners, who played in the UEFA Cup group phase this season, were six points away from safety after 20 games.

Pedro Pinto

AUSTRIA

Pucher the dual president

Martin Pucher has been appointed League president in succession to Frank Stronach, who stepped down in late December a few days after quitting as president of Austria Wien. Pucher, 49, is also a club president, of Mattersburg, but has vowed that his new role will not cause any conflict of interests.

Harry Miltner

LIECHTENSTEIN

Three in, three out

Vaduz have brought in two foreign internationals – Venezuela captain and midfielder Gabriel Urdaneta (from Young Boys of Berne) and Czech midfielder Patrick Gideon (Slavia Prague) – as well as Brazilian defender Mateus Alonso (Rio Branco). There were also three departures – Chilean midfielder Alonso Zuniga (to Deportivo Concepcion), compatriot Julio Lopez (released) and reserve keeper Florian Meier (FC Ruggell).

Graeme Crawford

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

FA gamble on Staunton

THREE YEARS AGO the FA took a chance when they elevated former national youth team manager Brian Kerr to coach the senior side. It didn't work out, the Republic failing to qualify for either Euro 2004 or this year's World Cup, and Kerr's contract was not renewed in October.

Now the association has taken an even bigger gamble in naming Steve Staunton as his successor. The 37-year-old, the Republic's most-capped player with 102, has no managerial experience, just a spell as assistant coach at English third level side Walsall. However, Sir Bobby Robson, the 73-year-old former England manager, will work alongside him in an advisory role. Staunton's first game in charge is a friendly at home to Sweden on March 1.

The Republic will play next year at the 82,000-capacity Croke Park, home of the Gaelic Athletic Association, during the redevelopment of Lansdowne Road.

Sean Creedon

Youth and experience…Staunton and Robson

BELGIUM

Standard's dip

"WINTER CHAMPIONS" Standard Liege were caught cold as the spring campaign got under way, losing 2-1 at home to promoted Zulte-Waregem then managing only a 0-0 draw at struggling St Truiden.

The results, which allowed Club Brugge to draw level, were hardly in keeping with the claim of Standard's Portuguese star Sergio Conceicao that his Belgium Player of the Year award would provide everyone at Sclessin with the extra motivation to kick on and secure the championship for the first time since 1983.

The 31-year-old former Portugal midfielder, only the third foreigner to win the award, the Golden Shoe, in its 52-year history, now has two other ex-Portuguese League team-mates – defender Jorge Costa, signed from FC Porto, and French midfielder Siramana Dembele (Vitoria Setubal).

Anderlecht, who had been Standard's closest challengers, also managed only a point from their first two games after the break. They had a clear-out during the transfer window, loaning Walter Baseggio to Treviso and selling Anatoli Gerk, Tristan Peersman and Nenad Jestrovic. The latter was replaced by Argentinian Nicolas Frutos from Independiente.

Mouscron have appointed former Lierse coach Paul Put.

Nicholas Harling

Top man…Sergio Conceicao became only the third foreigner to receive the Golden Shoe as Belgium's Player of the Year

SWEDEN

Departures leave hole at Helsingborgs

Helsingborgs suffered the biggest loss of the winter, as three key players moved to foreign clubs – stopper David Ljung, to Padova in Italy, Canada midfielder Atiba Hutchinson, to FC Copenhagen, and top-scoring Danish forward Peter Graulund, who rejoined AGF Aarhus in his homeland.

Ex-Malmo coach Tom Prahl, recently appointed by Viking of Norway, has signed one of his former charges, stopper Peter Abelsson. Malmo have also lost Norwegian defender Jon-Inge Hoiland to Kaiserslautern, but signed Ulrich Vinzents from OB of Denmark. Champions Djurgardens took South African forward Lance Davids from 1860 Munich.

John Alvbage kept a clean sheet on his debut for the national team, a 0-0 friendly draw with Jordan in Abu Dhabi. The 23-year-old plays for Viborg in Denmark.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Drawing them in

The draw for the Euro 2008 qualifiers put Iceland in the same group as two other Nordic nations – Denmark and Sweden – as well as star-studded Spain, raising the prospect of good attendances for the home ties at the revamped national stadium.

Eyjolfur Sverrisson's first match as Iceland coach will be against Trinidad & Tobago in London on February 28.

National team captain Eidur Gudjohnsen has been named Icelandic Sportsman of the Year for the second time running.

Rab Christie

ESTONIA

Levadia add strength

Levadia Tallinn, last year's League runners-up, snapped up highly-rated defender Marek Lemsalu from Norwegians Bryne and midfielder Maksim Smirnov from city rivals and champions TVMK.

However, defender Sergei Hohlov-Simson has decided to retire at the age of 33 after four successful years at Levadia, while midfielder Aivar Anniste has joined Norwegian club Honefoss.

National team keeper Mart Poom has signed a permanent deal with Arsenal, until 2008, having been on loan at Highbury from Sunderland until the end of the season.

Andres Must

LATVIA

Yuran takes Ditton reins

Former Russia striker Sergei Yuran has agreed to coach top division newcomers Ditton Daugavpils, on a one-year contract, with the option of another 12 months. The 36-year-old joins from a stint at Russian Second Division side Dinamo Stavropol.

Two Latvian internationals have switched clubs in Russia. Juris Laizans moved from CSKA Moscow to Rostov, while Andrejs Rubins has returned to Shinnik Yaroslavl after a year on loan at Spartak Moscow.

Andres Must

WALES

Cwmbran face points loss

Cwmbran Town are facing a seven-point deduction, which would put them bottom of the table, after fielding two players who were allegedly signed to other clubs at the time.

The prospective docking is another blow to the 1993 League champions, who are already suffering financial problems.

Unbeaten defending champions Total Network Solutions maintained their 15-point lead at the top with a 2-0 home win over Caersws.

Mel Thomas

NORTHERN IRELAND

Championship-winning Coyle forced to quit

Roy Coyle, hailed as a hero after leading Glentoran to a sensational League triumph last season, has quit after a torrid time at the hands of the supporters in recent weeks following a disastrous run of form.

The manager had to be given a police escort at the end of a 5-2 defeat at Armagh City that left Glens still in third place but 21 points behind leaders and arch-rivals Linfield. He resigned four days later.

Second-placed Portadown have said goodbye to veteran striker Vinny Arkins, who scored 248 goals in more than 400 games for the club. The 35-year-old has moved south of the border to Bohemians in Dublin, his home city.

The FA has agreed "in principle" to examine a controversial government proposal to build a 42,000-capacity national stadium on the site of the Maze prison, 10 miles outside Belfast. However, the project will go ahead only if the soccer, rugby and gaelic football authorities agree to support the plan.

Roy Kitson

Century of caps…Litmanen

FINLAND

Ton up for Litmanen

JARI LITMANEN became only the second Finnish player to win 100 caps – after Ari Hjelm – when appearing in the 1-0 friendly defeat by South Korea in Saudi Arabia. The 35-year-old is the country's record goalscorer with 25.

Finland had drawn 1-1 with Saudi Arabia four days earlier, in Roy Hodgson's first game as national coach. The Englishman had not been scheduled to take charge until August, but was released early by his club, Viking of Norway, after they lined up Tom Prahl as a replacement.

Finland striker Alexei Eremenko has joined Saturn in Russia from Italy's Lecce, while stopper Juha Pasoja is now at Ham-Kam in Norway from FC Haka.

Pentti Hietanen

Quick off the mark…Boyd scored a hat-trick on his Rangers debut

SCOTLAND

New blood for Hearts

SECOND-PLACED HEARTS made no fewer than five signings on the final day of the transfer window as they aim to revive their championship challenge. The arrivals included Bosnian winger Mirsad Beslija, from Belgian side Genk. Hearts had earlier re-signed Scotland forward Neil McCann from Southampton, but he suffered a knee injury in his first game back, against Kilmarnock, sidelining him for six weeks.

Former Kilmarnock striker Kris Boyd had a much more enjoyable debut for Rangers, hitting a hat-trick in the 5-0 Cup win over Peterhead.

Leaders Celtic made just two signings – defender Mark Wilson from Dundee United and veteran striker Dion Dublin from Leicester. However, Wolves and Scotland striker Kenny Miller has signed a pre-contract agreement to move to Parkhead in the summer.

Gordon Chisholm was the first managerial casualty of 2006 when fired by lowly Dundee United. His replacement is Craig Brewster, a United favourite as a player, who has guided Inverness Caledonian Thistle into the top half of the Premier League this season. Ex-Inverness player Charlie Christie has replaced Brewster.

Alan Fairley

NORWAY

Raw recruits are taught a lesson

Heads we lose…Frode Kippe and Steinar Pedersen come out second best to USA's Nate Jaqua during the 5-0 drubbing

THE NATIONAL TEAM suffered their worst defeat for 33 years when losing 5-0 to the United States in Carson, California. Norway also lost their other tour game, 2-1 to Mexico in San Francisco four days earlier.

Coach Age Hareide took a makeshift, young squad to the USA, and their inexperience showed during the drubbing by the hosts, for whom Taylor Twellman hit a hat-trick.

Hareide called the game a "catastrophe de luxe", adding: "Everything went wrong and my young players became disheartened. It was a terrible experience."

The youngsters had given a much better account of themselves against Mexico, with Brann winger Petter Vaagan Moen their best performer. The former Under-21 player set up the opening goal for Ole Martin Arst before Francisco Fonseca and Luis Perez, whose winner came two minutes from time, turned it round for the Mexicans.

Another newcomer, Fredrikstad full-back Trond Erik Bertelsen, also played well, showing good pace, strength and commitment.

At home, Viking's new Swedish coach Tom Prahl signed central defender Peter Abelsson from his former club Malmo, while Lyn sold Finn Keijo Huusko to Stromsgodset, who are expected to challenge strongly for promotion this season.

Sigurd Odegaard

DENMARK

Fyn de siecle

Two of the oldest Danish clubs, Odense's B1909 and B1913, have agreed to merge, despite having been bitter rivals for the best part of a century, in the hope that it will improve their fortunes.

For many years the reds of B1909 and the blues of B1913 were regulars in the top flight, and their derby meetings were played in front of huge crowds. But both sides have languished in the regional second division – Denmark's third tier – or even lower during the past decade, with little prospect of change.

The new entity, which includes a third club, Dalum, will play as FC Fyn from next season, starting off in the regional second division, with a target of reaching the Superliga by 2009. That is not unrealistic given that four of the 12 current top division clubs are the product of such mergers.

But although the deal is meant to improve the Odense clubs' fortunes, it was agreed only after months of fierce debate. Indeed, some still hate the idea. "I don't understand why we need an FC Fyn," said B1913 captain Danny Carlsen. "It would be better for B1913 to run itself."

The identities of B1909 and B1913 will not be completely lost, however. Both clubs will play in the amateur Danmarksserien, though they will not be able to be promoted above that level.

Two transfers dominated the window in Denmark. Daniel Agger left Brondby for Liverpool for a national record £5.8million. Brondby also sold striker Morten Skoubo to Real Sociedad for £1.8m.

Jim Holden

First time round…Ulusoy (left) presents Turkish state president Ahmet Necdet Sezer with a personalised national team shirt after the 2002 World Cup success

TURKEY

Ulusoy back despite corruption claims

A BIZARRE TURN of events has led to the ousting of federation president Levent Bicakci and the re-election of his predecessor, Haluk Ulusoy, whose administration was tainted by corruption allegations and whose departure 18 months previously was engineered to some extent by the government, eager to clean up the sport.

So it was ironic that recent events were set in motion, albeit unwittingly, by Sports Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin when he reacted to the brawl at the end of Turkey's World Cup play-off encounter with Switzerland in Istanbul by giving a general warning to federation chiefs in all sports that under-performers must go.

The football federation then took the decision to hold a vote of confidence in the presidency of Bicakci and his team, presumably with the idea that the vote would reaffirm his mandate rather than lead to his departure. However, the vote of confidence somehow turned into an election for a new president, and all manner of candidates began queuing up to stand.

Ulusoy, whose supporters believe it was his charismatic leadership that played a major part in Turkey reaching the heights of the 2002 World Cup semi-finals, was in fact barred from standing by new rules that excluded non-university graduates from becoming president. But the Constitutional Court then ordered the annulment of that rule and Ulusoy was in the running once more.

A furious Sahin railed against the possibility of Ulusoy returning as president while the Prime Minister's Office was still investigating several alleged financial irregularities related to his time in charge. "Let him clear his name and then come forward," Sahin said. "Those people who are applying to run football today are going around as if they were pure as virgin snow…The state will do what is necessary in the face of those who defy it."

The football world's answer was a big two fingers to the government as, on January 10, Ulusoy won the election by seven votes from Ayhan Bermek, widely seen as the government candidate.

Sahin hasn't given up yet, though. While he claims to have nothing personally against Ulusoy, he vowed to force a new presidential election, from which the new incumbent would be barred because, under federation rules, he cannot be elected for a third time. "I will do my duty and then everyone must take the consequences," he said.

Suna Erdem

GREECE

Big Three penalised

The country's big three clubs have all been penalised for their fans' hooliganism during the autumn.

AEK Athens were hardest hit, being ordered to play three home games behind closed doors and fined £84,000. Panathinaikos received a one-game closed-doors order and a fine of £32,000, while Olympiakos were docked £40,000.

No such problems for Akratitos, who barely get any fans at all, let alone rowdy ones. The Athens club had an average home crowd of just 490 during the autumn, and sold only 26 tickets for the visit of Xanthi.

Lou Economopoulos

SLOVENIA

Oblak optimistic

National coach Branko Oblak believes his team will face a battle with Bulgaria and Romania to qualify for Euro 2008 behind group favourites Holland. He said: "It will be between the three of us and I'm optimistic. We have proved we can cope with teams from the Balkans."

Oblak began his preparations by calling up a "B" team for the Vale de Tejo tournament in Portugal. Slovenia lost 3-2 to Slovakia in the Final, which they reached after beating the hosts on penalties following a 1-1 draw. The other countries also fielded second-string teams.

Zdravko Reic

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Carry on, Blaz

National coach Blaz Sliskovic has been handed a two-year contract extension, running to the end of the Euro 2008 qualifiers, in recognition of the team's improved showing. Bosnia-Herzegovina finished third in their World Cup qualifying group, but lost only once in their meetings with group winners Serbia & Montenegro and runners-up Spain. Sliskovic also won federation approval to simultaneously continue as coach of top division side Zrinjski.

League leaders Siroki Brijeg have signed former Dinamo Zagreb and Croatia keeper Vladimir Vasilj, who was unhappy at a lack of first-team chances at Turkish club Konyaspor.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIA

Exodus to Israel

Several internationals have joined Israeli clubs, with Georgi Hristov and Igor Jancevski signing for Upper Nazareth, from Debrecen in Hungary and Turkish side Diyarbakirspor respectively, while Igor Mitreski is now at Beitar Jerusalem, from Ukrainians Metalurh Zaporizhzhya. Danco Masev has moved to Mitreski's former club, from Vardar Skopje.

Champions and leaders Rabotnicki Kometal added Dragoljub Jeremic from Partizan Belgrade to their squad during the transfer window.

Michel Stojmanovski

CYPRUS

Rivals deal for Korolovszky

League leaders Apollon have signed defender/defensive midfielder Gabor Korolovszky after he struggled to regain his starting place at title rivals Omonia. The Hungarian, who has signed on a 30-month contract, had two successful seasons at Omonia, but injury limited his first-team appearances in the past few months.

Omonia have landed Belgian defender Stijn Vreven, 32, from Dutch club Vitesse Arnhem.

APOEL, the other championship contenders, signed Croat defender Ivan Udarevic from Polonia of Poland.

Soulis Theodosiou

MALTA

Hot Stripes go clear

Birkirkara have gone clear at the top of the table in style, taking advantage of champions Sliema Wanderers' dip in form with two consecutive 6-0 wins. Captain Michael Galea scored four goals in the Stripes' demolition of Mosta, while Etienne Barbara hit a hat-trick against Hamrun.

Sliema were four points back after 17 rounds having been held to 0-0 draws by Marsaxlokk and Floriana.

Czech Dusan Fitzel has succeeded Horst Heese as national team boss. He recently coached Slavia Prague's youth teams and led the Czech Under-19s to runners-up spot at the European Championship in 2000.

Domenico Aquilina

CROATIA

Hajduk pay for racist banner

HAJDUK SPLIT have been fined £1,800 after fans displayed a banner with a racist message before the home game against arch-rivals Dinamo Zagreb. It is the first fine for racist offences in Croatian football.

Ironically, the game did not go ahead because a torrential downpour and high winds made play impossible.

Dinamo increased their pool of Brazilians by bringing in 21-year-old forward Anderson Costa from Vasco da Gama.

Former Germany striker Fredi Bobic has decided to end his career in Croatia, his mother's homeland, by signing for Rijeka.

Zdravko Reic

Family ties…Bobic will finish his playing career with Rijeka

Red Star arrival…Takayuki Suzuki

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Top two wheel and deal

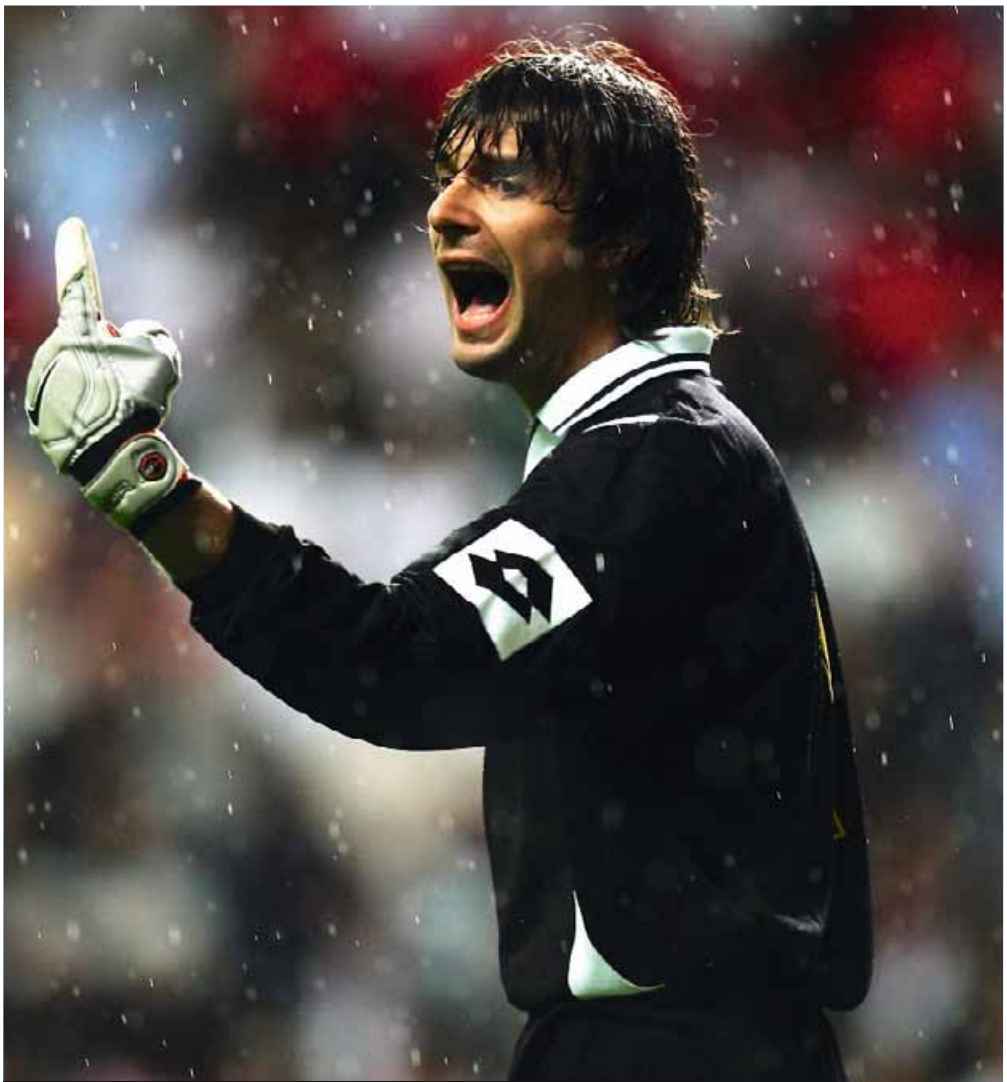
LEAGUE LEADERS Red Star Belgrade and city rivals Partizan, their closest challengers, have both been busy strengthening their squads ahead of what is expected to be an exciting championship run-in.

Red Star, three points clear, kept their promise to hold on to star striker Nikola Zigic, in spite of reported offers from Arsenal, West Ham and Lokomotiv Moscow of up to £10million. They also made five new signings – Under-21 midfielder Nenad Milijas from Zemun, Japan forward Takayuki Suzuki (Kashima Antlers), Dusan Djokic, the League top scorer with 11 goals, and left-back Dusan Andjelkovic (both Vozdovac), and central defender Goran Adamovic (Second Division BASK Belgrade).

Partizan, the champions, brought back international midfielder Zvonimir Vukic, still under contract at Shakhtar Donetsk but who had been on loan at Portsmouth, and striker Danko Lazovic, who failed to make the grade at Feyenoord or Bayer Leverkusen.

National Under-21 team defenders Milan Stepanov (Vojvodina) and Dusko Tosic (OFK Belgrade) have joined Trabzonspor and Sochaux respectively.

Vladimir Novak



Snow joke…Shovkovskyi's broken collar bone will keep him out for at least three months

UKRAINE

Shovkovskyi faces race to make finals

THE NATIONAL TEAM were dealt a major blow in the build-up to their first World Cup when first-choice goalkeeper Olexander Shovkovskyi was sidelined for at least three months after breaking his collar bone playing for Kyiv Dynamo in a friendly against FC Moscow in Abu Dhabi.

That has put a big question mark over his availability for the finals, and his absence would be a real setback. Shovkovskyi, 31, was one of the key men behind Ukraine's qualification, keeping six clean sheets in the 12 group matches. He is also the most experienced member of the squad, having won 64 caps.

Shovkovskyi's injury was compounded when the national team's reserve keeper Maxim Startsev, of Kryvbas, underwent an operation for a groin injury that will keep him out for two months. The goalkeeping crisis has given a window of opportunity to Vitaliy Reva, recalled by Dynamo from loan at city rivals Arsenal and who may yet replace Shovkovskyi in the national team as well.

Another keeper in the headlines was Under-21 star Bogdan Shust, who joined Shakhtar Donetsk from Karpaty Lviv for £600,000, a domestic record for a goalkeeper.

Dynamo, leaders at the winter break, were also active in the winter transfer market, bringing in two outfield players – Russia Under-21 defender Andrei Yeschenko from FC Khimki and Zakarpattya midfielder Taras Mikhalik. But the club look set to offload Croatia midfielder Jerko Leko, compatriot Goran Sablic and former Bulgaria striker Georgi Peev.

Oleg Zadernovsky

CZECH REPUBLIC

Turkey trot

Several of the League's top players, including leading goalscorer Tomas Michalek of Jablonec, joined Turkish clubs in January in an unprecedented exodus brokered by Czech agency Sport Invest International.

The largest contingent of exiles is at Vestel Manisaspor, who have added Slovan Liberec's Slovak forward Filip Holosko and Sparta Prague midfielder Lukas Zelenka to a squad that already contains two Czechs – Petr Johana and Michal Meduna. Manisaspor also had an offer for Liberec captain Tomas Zapotocny rejected.

Struggling Malatyaspor signed both Michalek and his Jablonec strike partner, Zdenek Senkerik, while Sparta Prague defender Adam Petrous joined Ankaraspor.

Sparta, the struggling defending champions, have re-signed former national team defender Tomas Repka from West Ham on a three-year contract. Meanwhile, former Czech Republic coach Jozef Chovanec has been appointed club president.

Three former officials with the Synot club and seven former referees have been found guilty of corruption following a court case related to a 2004 match-fixing scandal. The 10, who include former Synot owner Ivo Valenta, each received a fine of between £1,200 and £7,200.

Sam Beckwith

HUNGARY

Matthaus leaves a void

Lothar Matthaus' departure for Brazilian club Atletico Paranaense meant the national team did not have a coach when the draw was made for the Euro 2008 qualifiers. The new man will lead Hungary into ties against European champions Greece, Turkey, Norway, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova and Malta.

Foreigners linked with the post include Miroslav Blazevic, Berti Vogts, Xabier Azkargorta Uriarte, Arie Haan and John Gregory, while Ferencvaros playing and coaching legend Tibor Nyilasi has also been put in the frame.

Peterjon Cresswell

RUSSIA

The Brazilians are coming

The Russian Football Union has reportedly paid £850,000 to bring

world champions Brazil to Moscow for a friendly on March 1.

But while the pitch at the Lokomotiv stadium should be in good condition – the grass has been growing under special covers since January, despite the recent record low of -34°C – the team itself may well not be. The League season does not start until mid-March, leaving the as yet unnamed new national coach to base his choice of players on last year's performances and the far-from-unbiased recommendations of their club coaches.

Victor Gusev

GEORGIA

Toppmoller takes charge

Klaus Toppmoller, who led Bayer Leverkusen to the 2002 Champions League Final, has taken charge of Georgia in his first step into the international arena.

But the 54-year-old German, who will guide them through the Euro 2008 qualifying campaign, has said he will not live in Georgia, but merely visit during the build-up for internationals.

"I know Georgia have a group of very strong players, including skipper Kakha Kaladze of Milan and AZ Alkmaar forward Shota Arveladze," Toppmoller said. "My priority is to create from them a team capable of fighting for qualification from our so-called Group of Death." Georgia face France, Italy, Ukraine, Scotland, Lithuania and the Faroe Islands.

"Toppi" succeeds Gayoz Darsadze, who failed to improve the team's showing in the remaining World Cup qualifiers having succeeded Frenchman Alain Giresse last July.

Former Russia Under-21 coach Andrei Tchernyshov has taken the reins at Dinamo Tbilisi, replacing Kakhaber Tskhadadze.

Oleg Zadernovsky

Poli new boy…Ifeanyi Emeghara

POLAND

Petrescu makes his mark

No go…Wisla turned down an offer for playmaker Sobolewski

NEW WISLA KRAKOW coach Dan Petrescu has been busy wheeling and dealing in the transfer market in a bid to keep the club on course for a fourth consecutive League championship and finally reach the Holy Grail, the Champions League group stage, in what is Wisla's centenary year.

The former Romania stalwart brought in ex-Poland midfielder Pawel Kaczorowski, who was without a club, and also lined up Australian defender Michael Thwaite to join from National Bucharest in the summer. At the same time, Petrescu, who is on a three-year contract, turned down offers for two key players – right-back Marcin Baszczynski and playmaker Radoslaw Sobolewski, who were sought by West Ham and Southampton respectively. Meanwhile, Argentinian midfielder Mauro Cantoro, a fan favourite, has signed a contract extension until 2009.

But that is nothing compared to the 10-year extension signed by Wojciech Stawowy, the coach of Wisla's neighbours, Cracovia. He snapped up the extraordinary offer made by controversial chairman and club owner, Janusz Filipiak, but could not hide his surprise. "I am very happy that my work was so well appreciated, despite the fact the team results have not been stunning," said Stawowy, whose side are seventh at the winter break, eight points behind Wisla. "But we still have much to do, especially with our talented youngsters. And the stability [promised by the extension] can help me a lot in this."

Several Polish internationals switched clubs during January. Striker Emmanuel Olisadebe joined Portsmouth from Panathinaikos until the end of the season, while fellow forward Tomasz Frankowski also moved to England, to Wolverhampton, from Spanish side Elche. Defender Tomasz Hajto switched English clubs (from Southampton to Derby), while forward Marcin Zewlakow returned to Belgian side Excelsior Mouscron from a loan spell at Metz in France. Zewlakow's twin brother, defender Michal, has agreed to join Olympiakos from Anderlecht in the summer.

Dariusz Kurowski

ROMANIA

Poli spend, spend, spend

POLITEHNICA TIMISOARA, now coached by Gheorghe Hagi, have been on the biggest spending spree in Romanian footballing history, splashing out more than £2.5million on five players, a sum bigger than the annual budget of 12 of the 16 top division clubs. Poli's new boys are Hungarian Peter Simek (from Videoton), Serbs Sretan Stanic and Vladimir Glusevic (both Rad Belgrade), Nigerian Ifeanyi Emeghara (Partizan Belgrade), and Romanian Mihaita Plesan (Dinamo Bucharest). Alin Stoica also arrived on a free transfer.

Meanwhile, veteran national team forward Viorel Moldovan has left Poli for Rapid Bucharest, who also signed another Romania player, Daniel Pancu, from Besiktas.

Defending champions Steaua Bucharest brought in Portuguese goalkeeper Carlos Alberto Fernandez from Boavista as the replacement for Belorussian Vasily Khomutovsky, now at Tom Tomsk in Russia.

Spanish coach Esteban Vigo has taken the reins at leaders Dinamo Bucharest on a six-month contract, replacing Ioan Andone. The former Barcelona star is back in Romania seven years after a spell as assistant coach to Ramon Alesanco at National Bucharest and Universitatea Craiova.

Radu Timofte

LIBERTADORES CUP

Beware Mexican wave

Striking chance…Omar Bravo will spearhead Guadalajara's challenge for Libertadores Cup glory

COULD THIS BE the year in which a Mexican club finally makes the breakthrough and wins the Libertadores Cup? Certainly, their challenge has been getting stronger ever since Mexican sides were invited into the tournament eight years ago.

Cruz Azul showed their country's potential when reaching the 2001 Final, where they lost to Boca Juniors only on penalties, and Mexican football's relative financial strength suggests that debut triumph may not be far off.

Pumas UNAM were hard done by last December in the Final of the Sudamericana Cup, when losing to Boca on penalties, but the experience will be useful in their second Libertadores appearance.

The other two Mexican sides gave a strong showing in last year's edition. Tigres reached the quarter-finals, where they inflicted the only defeat suffered by champions Sao Paulo, winning 2-1 in the second leg after a 4-0 drubbing in Brazil. The Monterrey side, with Argentinian Walter Gaitan pulling the strings, will expect to do well again.

Guadalajara went one stage better than Tigres, losing 5-2 on aggregate to another Brazilian side, Atletico Paranaense. They might even have reached the Final had the Confederations Cup not depleted their squad. Spearheaded by the sharpness of Omar Bravo, they should go far once more.

While all this is encouraging for the Mexican challenge, all three teams have been drawn in the same group as Brazilian heavyweights, any of whom are potential champions.

But don't bank on Sao Paulo retaining the trophy. Since winning the Club World Championship in December, they have lost coach Paulo Autuori and some leading players. Their domestic form has also been patchy, and they will be grateful that their Libertadores campaign does not get under way until March 1, almost a month after some of the other contenders kick off.

City rivals Palmeiras, the 1999 champions, have their sights on a second win, but all eyes will be on Corinthians. Backed by mega-rich investors, the club have assembled a squad with European-style strength in depth, and there are huge expectations of Carlos Tevez and co. Corinthians have never got past the semi-finals and winning the title is an obsession. They are pre-tournament favourites, and veteran coach Antonio Lopes, a winner with Vasco da Gama in 1998, must deal with heavy pressure.

Internacional, pipped to the domestic title by Corinthians, have defensive problems but should not be discounted, with perky Rafael Sobis leading a dangerous strikeforce.

Brazil's two other representatives are both Libertadores debutants. Goias can play attractive football but have just sold off their best players. Second Division Paulista – the Copa Brasil holders – have a direct style and will be no pushovers.

Paulista are in the same group as twice winners River Plate, beset by poor form and internal discontent in recent months. Coach Daniel Passarella will have to get his raft of new recruits gelling quickly, but they showed promise when thrashing Bolivia's Oriente Petrolero 8-0 on aggregate in the preliminary round.

Producing young players, for so long River's hallmark, now seems to be the speciality of fellow Buenos Aires side Velez Sarsfield. The 1994 winners have managed to hold on to their midfield axis of Leandro Somoza and Leandro Gracian, while striker Lucas Castroman is back from injury.

Newell's Old Boys booked their place back in 2004 when winning the opening championship but it has been hard to keep the momentum going. At least coach Nery Pumpido, a winner with Olimpia of Paraguay in 2002, has kept his creative force of Ariel Ortega and Fernando Belluschi. That gives Newell's a touch of quality city rivals Rosario Central may lack.

Few will relish the trip to face Estudiantes. Coach Jorge Burruchaga has the ability to shine with limited resources, and his rugged, solid side have plenty of attacking power.

Cerro Porteno, Paraguay's best bet, will struggle to replace playmaker Julio Dos Santos, now at Bayern Munich, while Colombians Atletico Nacional are not in the same terrific form of a year ago.

Universidad Catolica look as good as any side to come out of Chile in a while. But with Corinthians and Tigres also in the group, they will do well to make the second round.

LDU Quito are possible dark horses. The Ecuadoreans are in an easy group, the altitude of their home city is always an advantage and they certainly have the talent to do some damage in the knockout stages.

Tim Vickery

My ball…Canada keeper Greg Sutton deals with a cross during the draw with the USA

CANADA

Draw brings Yallop cheer

NATIONAL COACH Frank Yallop was in upbeat mood after his team held World Cup finalists United States to a 0-0 draw in San Diego in January. "Performances like this indicate we are heading in the right direction," he said.

Canada captain and forward Dwayne De Rosario has been named Player of the Year. Defender Paul Stalteri, who joined Tottenham from Werder Bremen last summer, came a close second in the poll, conducted among media and fans.

The Canadian Soccer Association has announced that Toronto will host the Final of the 2007 World Youth Cup, even though the venue stadium has yet to be built.

Philippe Germain

ARGENTINA

New-look River start to flow

RIVER PLATE, now coached by former captain Daniel Passarella, were the biggest players in the mid-season transfer market as they sought to banish memories of a highly disappointing 2005.

Passarella landed striker Luciano Figueroa, who is eager to boost his claims for a World Cup place after failing to gain regular games for Villarreal in Spain.

The other arrivals were goalkeeper Juan Olave (Murcia), defenders Paulo Ferrari (Rosario Central) and Paraguayan Julio Cesar Caceres (Gremio), and midfielders Lucas Pusineri (Independiente) and Colombian Under-20 star Juan Carlos Toja (Independiente Santa Fe).

River certainly hit the ground running, thrashing Bolivians Oriente Petrolero 8-0 on aggregate to qualify for the Libertadores Cup group stage and Tiro Federal 5-0 on the first weekend of the closing championship.

It made a welcome change from last season, when River finished only sixth in the opening championship and 10th in the closing campaign. The poor showing was followed by the departure of Passarella's predecessor, Reinaldo Merlo, but that was more to do with player power than results. Captain Marcelo Gallardo, the fans' idol, led the revolt, telling Merlo his methods were wrong, that 90 per cent of the team agreed with him and that unless he left, Gallardo himself would quit. Merlo, who soon discovered he had little support from the board either, duly fell on his sword.

Opening champions Boca Juniors fell to a shock 2-1 defeat at Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy in their first closing championship match but beat Rosario Central 2-1 next time out.

Boca are virtually unchanged from the opening campaign (only veteran defender Rolando Schiavi has left) and for once do not have the distraction of the Libertadores Cup.

River apart, the transfer market was sluggish. That was good news in one respect, since the domestic game's few remaining young stars – Independiente's Sergio Aguero, Boca's Fernando Gago, River's Radamel Falcao Garcia and Tiro Federal's Javier Campora, the opening campaign's leading scorer – are all still in place.

Aguero is likely to command a fee of around £14million, a sum that would wipe out Independiente's entire debt. But although there have been offers, the club are adamant that there will be no sale before June.

Eric Weil

Head on…River new boy Figueroa (left) clashes with Luis Gutierrez of Oriente

Give us a game!

In the first of a series about teams without FIFA affiliation, Steve Menary reports on Greenland's struggles just to find some action

Rare outing…Greenland (in red) take on Orkney during the 2005 Island Games

GREENLAND, left out in the cold by FIFA and UEFA, have recently joined the New Federation Board, a body set up to represent teams that football's governing bodies exclude.

Greenland, the world's biggest island, with a population of around 55,000, has home rule from Denmark, as has southerly neighbour the Faroe Islands, fully-fledged members of UEFA and FIFA. Greenland approached UEFA about joining in 1998 but the entry criteria that allowed the Faroese to join in 1994 had been changed in the intervening years and the Greenlanders were snubbed.

"We applied to UEFA and were promised there would be some changes to their laws so we could be an associate member," says Jens Brinch, the head of Greenland's football association. "We don't have the money to play in the World Cup and European Championship qualifiers; we just wanted to play friendlies against teams like the Sami [representing Lapland] and the Faroese second team.

"We went to Zurich and they were very friendly to start with. They said they would help, but then they became very unfriendly, and I was never sure why. I think it was to do with Gibraltar, because if they let us in, then they would have to let Gibraltar in, too."

Gibraltar applied to join UEFA in the late 1990s but Spain, who claim sovereignty of the territory – still a British colony – threatened to quit the European body if it was allowed to enter.

One of UEFA's entry criteria was then changed, with membership now restricted to countries that are also in the United Nations. That ruled out Greenland.

But the country is determined not to let that put them off. "The most important thing is that we show football can be played in another way," Brinch says.

Joining the NF Board, which now has 18 members – from Monaco to the island of Zanzibar off east Africa and the Himalayan kingdom of Tibet – could provide Greenland with regular competition. A 16-team world cup is being planned for this autumn, with North Cyprus, one of the other NF Board members, as hosts.

Greenland's FA was founded in 1971 and affiliated to the Danish FA until breaking away in 1996. The island's first club was set up in 1933, the first League championship held in 1958, and there are now 76 clubs with 4,000 players.

Outdoor football is possible only during the summer months, and the 2005 championship was staged over just a week. Greenland's lack of roads meant some teams took seven days just to get to the northern host town of Ummannaq, where B-67 from the capital, Nuuk, beat Ilulissat 3-1 in the Final. Local side Malamuk finished in third place.

Four Greenlanders play in the Danish League – Niklas Kreutzmann at Aarhus Fremad, Rene Overballe and Aputsiaq Birch both at Frederikshavn, and Anton Overballe at Aalborg.

Anton Overballe was the only overseas-based player missing from Greenland's squad for the football tournament at the 2005 Island Games, a mini-Olympics for islands around the world.

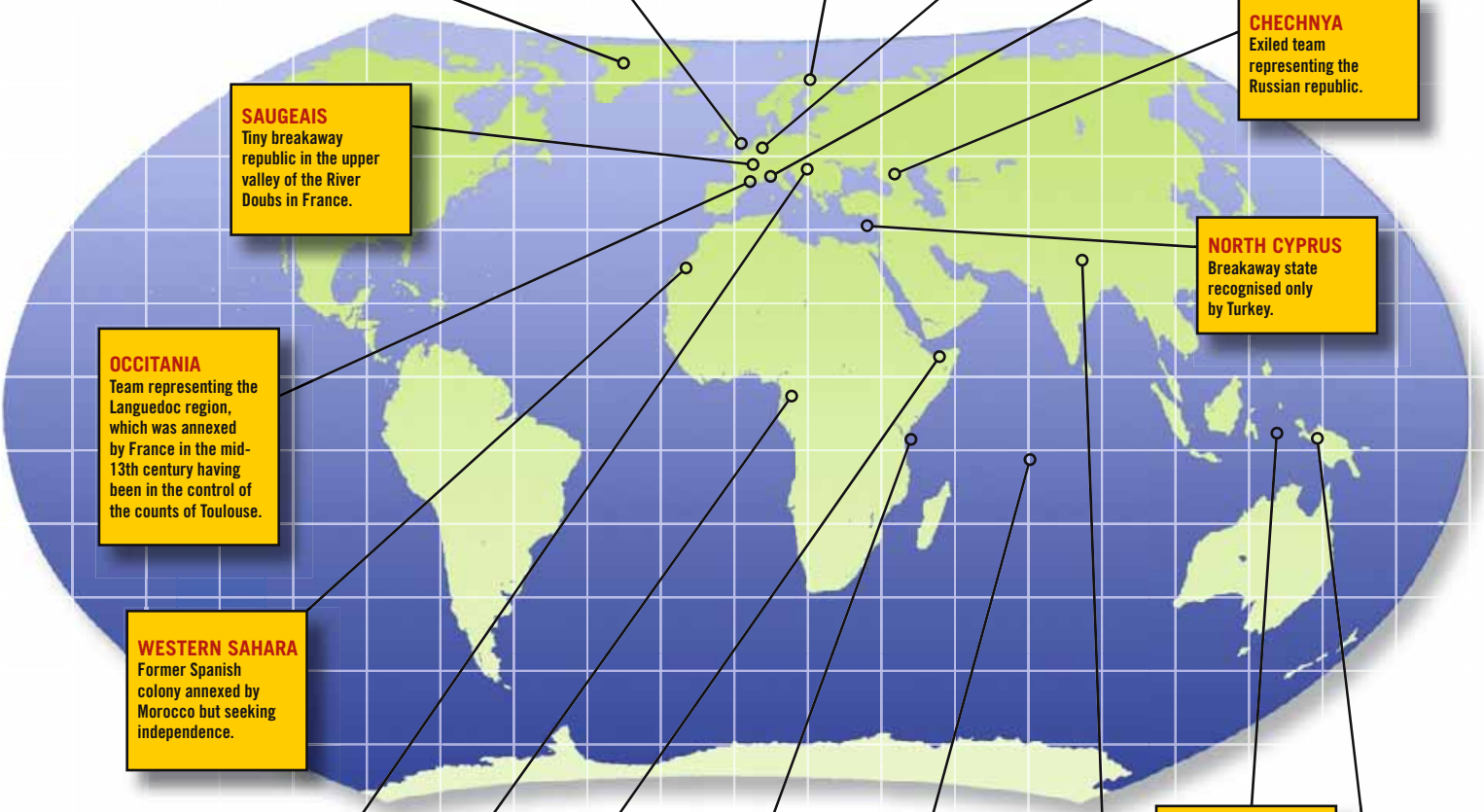
Apart from a 2001 friendly against Tibet in Copenhagen, which FIFA, UEFA and China all tried to stop (China claim Tibet as their own), the Games have provided Greenland with their only chance to play international matches.

At last year's tournament, staged in the Shetlands, Greenland drew 0-0 with Ynys Mon (Anglesey) and 4-4 with the Western Isles, beat Orkney 2-1, but lost 6-0 to Guernsey in their final group game to miss out on a chance to win a bronze medal.

If the NF Board's world cup plans do not come to fruition, Greenland's next outings will be at the 2007 Island Games in Rhodes.

No stopping it…Greenland and Tibet players mingle after their 2001 friendly

The 18 members of the New Federation Board



GREENLAND
The latest team to join the NF Board.

SEALAND
Breakaway country formed by the inhabitants of a Second World War fort in the North Sea. The team plays in Aalborg in Denmark.

SAMI
Team representing Laplanders from Norway, Sweden and Finland.

SOUTH LOWER SAXONY
Region of Germany.

MONACO
Mediterranean principality and the only member of the NF Board that also belongs to the United Nations.

CHECHNYA
Exiled team representing the Russian republic.

SAUGEAIS
Tiny breakaway republic in the upper valley of the River Doubs in France.

NORTH CYPRUS
Breakaway state recognised only by Turkey.

OCCITANIA
Team representing the Languedoc region, which was annexed by France in the mid-13th century having been in the control of the counts of Toulouse.

WESTERN SAHARA
Former Spanish colony annexed by Morocco but seeking independence.

ROMA
Team representing Europe's gypsy community.

SOMALILAND
Unrecognised state that broke away from strife-torn Somalia in 1991.

SOUTH MOLUCCAS
Region of Indonesia seeking independence.

CHAGOS
Team representing the islanders kicked out of their Indian Ocean home, a British colony, in the early 1970s by the UK government to make way for a US Air Force base. The islanders now live in Mauritius, the Seychelles and the UK.

TIBET
Himalayan kingdom invaded by China in 1949.

WEST PAPUA
The western half of Irian Jaya island and part of Indonesia but seeking independence.

SOUTH CAMEROON
Former British colony seeking separation from the rest of Cameroon.

ZANZIBAR
Island off the east coast of Africa that joined with Tanganyika in 1964 to form Tanzania.

Bin Hammam blows hot and cold

For better or worse…Bin Hammam is flanked by AFC general secretary Peter Velappan and organising committee chairman Zhang Jilong at the Asian Cup logo unveiling in Kuala Lumpur

ASIAN FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION president Mohamed Bin Hammam has confirmed that the 2007 Asian Cup will be staged in four countries as planned, despite his reservations.

Co-hosts Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia have now signed a legal contract – the Organisation Associations Agreement – with the region's governing body to make the deal official.

Bin Hammam had raised doubts about the decision in light of the spiralling costs and questions over the ability of the football authorities in Vietnam to stamp out the corruption in their domestic game. He also said he would not allow as many as four nations to co-host future editions of the tournament.

South-east Asia has not hosted the Asian Cup since 1984, when it was staged in Singapore, and received its chance this time as part of the confederation's attempts to rotate its events throughout the continent.

Bin Hammam, clearly feeling it was too late to change the hosting arrangement, put his doubts to one side at the contract signing event in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, saying: "I am positive that our four organising associations will all rise to the challenge of hosting what we hope will be AFC's best competition to date.

"We are all determined to work together to make a very successful competition. Up until now, all planning is going to schedule. The signing of the Organisation Associations Agreement is a milestone in the staging of AFC competitions as we enter a new era of professionalism."

The co-hosts have all been given an automatic berth in the finals, which run from July 7 to 29.

Meanwhile, the confederation has ordered Palestine and Iraq to play their home qualifying ties on neutral soil because of security concerns. Both teams have been drawn in Group E, along with China and Singapore.

The Palestinians had requested to stage games in Gaza City following the recent withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip. Palestine played all their "home" 2006 World Cup qualifiers in Qatar. Iraq played one in Qatar and two in Jordan.

Michael Church

UZBEKISTAN

Valeri on double duty

Valeri Nepomniatchi has been appointed national coach on a two-year contract, and the Turkmenistan-born 62-year-old also agreed to take charge at Uzbekistan's leading club, Pakhtakor.

Nepomniatchi takes the national team reins from Englishman Bobby Houghton, who steered the Uzbeks to the verge of World Cup qualification but quit after their controversial exit at the hands of Bahrain in the Asian section play-off.

Nepomniatchi, Uzbekistan's 15th coach in as many years, will oversee the country's bid to win the Asian Cup for the first time. He will also lead Pakhtakor into this year's Asian Champions League. The club reached the semi-finals in 2004.

Former Pakhtakor and national team coach Ravshan Haydarov will work as Nepomniatchi's assistant at the reigning League champions.

Michael Church

Flair…Qu Shengqing

OCEANIA

Adelaide coast into play-offs

ADELAIDE UNITED, Sydney FC, Central Coast Mariners and Newcastle Jets took the four championship play-off places in AUSTRALIA. Adelaide were assured of topping the league stage after taking a 10-point lead over closest challengers Sydney. Fifteen of the Adelaide squad are products of South Australian junior football. However, the flair of Chinese Qu Shengqing and Brazilian Fernando Rech has been a major factor in the club's success.

● Nokia Eagles Nadi won the tournament to determine FIJI'S representatives in the Oceania Club Championship, beating 4R Electric Ba on penalties in the Final after a 0-0 draw. Ba's consolation was that their district selection have finally been confirmed as 2003 League champions. They had lost out to Olympians after being docked six points for fielding an unregistered player. However, when Ba threatened to go to court to appeal against the decision, the FA scheduled a play-off between the two teams for March last year. It never took place, however, and now Ba have been given the title because Olympians have disbanded.

● In NEW ZEALAND, Keryn Jordan hit 17 goals in 10 games as Auckland City, the defending champions, took a six-point lead.

Paul Moon

ASIA ROUND-UP

● SOUTH KOREAN club Bucheon SK have relocated to Seogwipo on the island of Jeju after suffering a fall in attendances in their home city, near Seoul. They will now be known as Jeju United and will play at Seogwipo's World Cup stadium.

Former youth international Lee Ho-jin became the second South Korean to move to a Spanish top division club when signing for Racing Santander. Lee Chun-soo paved the way when he joined Real Sociedad.

● The new government-backed THAILAND Pro League, which is in direct competition with the FA's Premier League, kicked off at the beginning of February. It features 16 teams from all over the country.

● Mohammedan SC became the first team to win BANGLADESH'S National League trophy twice when beating arch-rivals Abahani 2-0 in the Final of this year's competition.

● The MALAYSIAN FA has appointed Robert Alberts as its technical director.

Michael Church & Azam Mahmood

JAPAN

Ono says yes to Reds

GUIDO BUCHWALD'S Urawa Reds followed up their Emperor's Cup Final victory by re-signing midfielder Shinji Ono from Feyenoord on a three-year contract. Ono, 26, is still generally regarded as Japan's most talented player but has suffered recurring injuries since moving to Holland in 2001. Now back to full fitness, he turned down a loan move to Bolton to sign for Reds.

Buchwald's other big signings are former Brazil striker Washington and midfielder Takahito Soma, both from relegated Tokyo Verdy 1969, and Japan striker Teruaki Kurobe, from Kyoto Purple Sanga.

Another national team forward, Takayuki Suzuki, has joined Red Star Belgrade in a two-year deal, finally leaving the Kashima Antlers nest following loan spells at Belgian sides Genk and Heusden-Zolder. Meanwhile, Japan utility player Koji Nakata has joined Basle from Marseille.

Other major deals were: Japan defender Akira Kaji from FC Tokyo to Gamba Osaka, Brazilian striker Magno Alvez (Oita Trinita to Gamba Osaka), former Japan midfielder Tomokazu Myojin (Kashiwa Reysol to Gamba Osaka), former Japan striker Kota Yoshihara (Gamba Osaka to Omiya Ardija), South Korea midfielder Kim Jung-woo (Ulsan Hyundai Horang-i to Nagoya Grampus Eight), Slovakia defender Marek Spilar (Club Brugge to Grampus Eight) and Brazilian striker Ueslei (Atletico Mineiro to Sanfrecce Hiroshima).

The season opens on February 25 with the Super Cup match between champions Gamba Osaka and Urawa Reds.

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae

Welcome home…Ono is greeted by Reds coach Buchwald

TALENT SCOUT

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Vladimir STOJKOVIC

Serb next in line in his country's roll call of great keepers

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO – and the former Yugoslavia in general – has always been proud of its great goalkeeping tradition. After the blip of Yugoslavia's qualifying campaign for the 2002 World Cup, when no fewer than six keepers were used, Dragoslav Jevric has established himself as the national team's highly reliable first-choice, conceding just one goal in 10 qualifiers for this year's World Cup.

Luckily for the country, it seems that Jevric has a worthy successor in waiting – 22-year-old Vladimir Stojkovic, who has been in impressive form for Red Star Belgrade and the national Under-21 side.

This summer he will represent Serbia & Montenegro at the European Championship in Portugal, and then is expected to travel to Germany with the senior squad.

Stojkovic has goalkeeping in the blood – his father and older brother have both played in that position – but he started out as a striker. However, he switched to his current trade after being inspired by the ovations former Red Star keeper Zvonko Milojevic used to receive. At 13 Stojkovic joined the Red Star youth set-up, and made his first-team debut four years later.

The youngster has a great deal of persistence and self-confidence, as shown by the fact that he has managed to get his career back on track after a few wayward years. Three years ago, the then teenager was fired by Red Star after a spell of poor discipline and bad behaviour.

He joined Zemun and gradually got a chance to prove his great talent. After getting in the first team there he broke into the national Under-21 side and finally, last summer, Red Star welcomed back the prodigal son.

Even then, Stojkovic was only a reserve. But, in early September, Italian coach Walter Zenga – a goalkeeping great himself – gave the youngster a starting berth in the UEFA Cup away to Sporting Braga. Stojkovic grabbed the opportunity with both hands, putting in a man-of-the-match performance in the 1-1 draw, which put his side through to the group stage on away goals, and has held on to the jersey ever since.

The Serbian press has dubbed him "Great Vladimir II" – "Great Vladimir I" was Vladimir Beara, one of the best Yugoslav keepers of all time.

"Stojkovic has everything needed for a great career. He just needs to continue working hard and maintaining a serious commitment," says Red Star general manager Stevan Stojanovic, goalkeeper and captain of the Red Star team that won the European Cup in 1991.

Vladimir Novak

FACT FILE

Club	Red Star Belgrade
Country	Serbia & Montenegro
Born	July 28, 1983, in Loznica
Previous club	Zemun

Starring for Livorno…Marco Amelia

10 more promising keepers

Marco Amelia

Livorno

One of the main reasons the Tuscan club are riding high in Serie A. Richly deserved his inclusion in Italy's senior national squad last autumn.

Agile…Gordon

Craig Gordon

Hearts

A key figure in the renaissance of the Jam Tarts. Agile, has good reflexes and is reliable when handling the ball.

Igor Akinfeev

CSKA Moscow

Still a teenager but has achieved so much, helping his club win the Russian League in 2003 and the UEFA Cup last year, as well as establishing himself as the national team's first-choice keeper.

Gennaro Bracigliano

Nancy

Very quick off his line and produces some truly acrobatic saves. His uncle, Vincent Bracigliano, was a top defensive midfielder at Nantes in the 1980s.

Charles-Edouard Itandje

Lens

Athletic, brave former French Under-21 keeper.

Idris Carlos Kameni

Espanyol

Cameroon's first-choice keeper and an expert at saving penalties. Surely destined for a bigger club some time soon.

Javier Mandaluniz

Athletic Bilbao

Yet another fine keeper to emerge from the Basque country. He was excellent for Spain as they finished runners-up at the 2003 World Under-17 Championship.

Francisco Guillermo Ochoa

America

Outstanding Mexican prospect, born in Guadalajara but who served his goalkeeping apprenticeship in Mexico City with America. Not particularly tall but his amazing reflexes more than compensate.

Penalty stopper…Kameni

Michael Rensing

Bayern Munich

Bayern make no secret of their belief that the highly-promising 21-year-old will take over as first-choice from Oliver Kahn in a couple of years.

Heir to Kahn…Rensing

Rubinho

Vitoria Setubal

A star of the Brazilian Under-21 side that won the Toulon tournament in 2002. Recently joined Portuguese club Vitoria Setubal from Corinthians.

Nick Bidwell

save 46%
12 issues full price £37.20

save 45%
12 issues full price £36.80

save 36%
12 issues full price £31.30

ANY MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION FOR ONLY £19.99*

save 27%
12 issues full price £27.72

save 49%
12 issues full price £39.20

Stuck for ideas for Mother's Day?

A subscription makes a unique & thoughtful gift

Subscribe today!

save 39%
10 issues full price £32.83

save 29%
10 issues full price £28.33

save 48%
12 issues full price £38.70

save 38%
10 issues full price £32.67

save 36%
12 issues full price £31.60

- A subscription is the perfect gift for Mothers Day
- Your gift will be appreciated long after it's been given
- There's a great selection of magazines to choose from
- Big savings on every magazine

*Offer only applies to featured magazines

To subscribe call the Order Hotline 9am-9pm

0845 676 7778

Quote code: MZQW have your payment details ready when you call.

You can order Online:

www.giftmags.co.uk/IXDH

Your Details This section must be completed.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: Forename:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Home Tel. No. (incl. area code)

If you'd like to receive emails from IPC containing news, special offers, product and service information and online market research questionnaires, please include your email below.

Email:

Date of Birth: D D M M Y Y Y Y

(Complete only if the subscription is for yourself)

Mag Title:

MZQW

Gift Subscription Also complete the 'Your Details' section opposite.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: Forename:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Home Tel. No. (incl. area code)

If the person you're buying this subscription for is under 18, please add their date of birth below

Date of Birth: D D M M Y Y Y Y

Mag Title:

Payment Details

I enclose a Cheque/postal order for £_____ made payable to IPC Media Ltd.

Or please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Switch/Maestro

Card No: (Switch/Maestro)

Expiry date: / Issue No./Valid from: /

Signature (I am over 18): Date:

Complete this coupon & send along with your payment to:
IPC Subscriptions, FREEPOST, CY1061, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3BR (no stamp needed)

Final closing date for all orders is 30 April 2006. All Prices are discounted from the full subscription rate advertised in each title, include P&P and are correct at time of going to press. Please allow up to 6 weeks for the delivery of your first subscription issue. Offer only available for delivery to UK addresses. **For enquiries and overseas rates call +44 (0)845 676 7778, or email ipcsubs@qss-uk.com.** The above magazines and IPC would like to contact you by post or telephone to promote and ask your opinion on our magazines and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to hear from IPC ☐ IPC may occasionally pass your details to carefully selected organisations so that they can contact you by telephone or post with regards to promoting and researching their products and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to be contacted ☐

PROGRAMMES

PROGRAMME PROMOTIONS

VISIT THE ESSENTIAL WEBSITE FOR PROGRAMME COLLECTORS

www.footballprogrammes.com

which includes an up to date listing of our stock, pre-war to date

No internet access ? No problem!

Clients who have never sent before, forward your name and address to:

P.O. BOX 209, Hounslow, Middx TW3 4DF

For a free copy of our next bi-monthly

MAIL ORDER CATALOGUE

If you have been on our database previously please send 5 x 1st class stamps towards costs.

FOOTBALL PROGRAMME COLLECTIONS ALWAYS WANTED ! (020) 8569 5131

FREE

PROGRAMME CATALOGUE

To receive a **FREE** copy of our latest catalogue (listing several thousanddifferent mint condition Big Match and League teams programmes etc.) please send your name and address to:

STEVE EARL FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES (WS)
BROAD ST., BUNGAY, SUFFOLK NR35 1AH

or phone **01986 892621** or visit **www.footballprogs.co.uk**

(Big Match Programmes also purchased)

FOR SALE

Football Website

OFFERS

www.tufftalk.com

COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF PROGRAMMES INCLUDING A GOOD SELECTION OF EUROPEAN

We are always interested in purchasing collectors especially older items.

Please send 50p for our latest catalogue to:

KATH and PETE,
Rundo Football Programmes, 4 Crawford Avenue, Gauldry, Newport-On-Tay, DD6 8SG. Tel: 01382 330356
Peter@rundo.fsbusiness.co.uk www.KathPeterrundo.co.uk

MEMORABILIA

FOOTBALL HEAVEN

For all kinds of football souvenirs & memorabilia

Badges, books, Corinthians, flags, pennants, scarves, shirts signed items, videos and much more.

Over 500 different football books, many out of print. Over 700 different football videos, many deleted.
Over 2200 different football badges from around the world and much more.

Flags and badges for World Cup 2006.

www.footballheaven.net
email: info@footballheaven.net
Phone: (44) 01464 821333
Fax: (44) 01464 821330

FOOTBALL KITS

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO OFFICIAL WORLD-WIDE FOOTBALL PRODUCTS

www.subside.co.uk **subside sports**

NEW SHIRT RELEASES

01. 0607 Czech Rep. Home S/S £39.99
02. 0607 Cameroon Home S/S £39.99
03. 0507 Japan Home S/S No.9 Takahara £49.99
04. 0607 Germany Away S/S £39.99
05. 0507 Spain Home S/S Torres £49.99
06. 0507 Argentina Home S/S No.19 Messi £49.99

WWW.SUBSIDE.CO.UK
0800 018 9888

MEMORABILIA

ENAMEL BADGES. SCOTTISH, Irish, Uk, worldwide selection for sale for sale. Send for FREE illustrated catalogue. T.R. Smith, 48 Greyfriars Street, Glasgow, Scotland, G32 6RF Tel: 0141 7783409 or email badgepins@aol.com

The perfect gift for all football fans

To see our full range of club products go to www.sportsart.co.uk or call 0870 727 6899 sportsart

Stylish and official club merchandise for all major clubs

MEMORABILIA

FOOTBALL MEMORABILIA

Unique and rare opportunity to obtain a limited edition 1905 official original photo of the first ever Chelsea Football Team

F.W. Parker (Hon Financial Sec), T. Miller, C. Donaghy, F. O'Hara, J. Craige, J.T. Robertson (Manager)

H.A. Mears, Esq. (Director), J. Watson, M. Byrne, R. Mackie, R. McRoberts, R. McEwan, F. Wolff (H. Ransone, J. Miller, Trainers)

M. Moran, G. Key, J. Robertson, W. Foulke, J. Windbridge, D. Copeland, J. Kirwan

Price: £69.50 + £3 p&p

Cheques and Postal Orders to Roger Meakins, 171 West Street, Dunstable, Beds LU6 1PD

Each print is numbered and signed with a letter of authenticity
Copyright R. D. Meakins

For future information please contact:
Roger Meakins on 01582 606068 or Fax 01582 673399

PLAY-BY-MAIL

Welcome to the new and improved Play By Mail football management game **Ultimate Europe.** If you're new to PBM or are already a fan then this is the game to be in.

Will you try to buy immediate success by scouring the world for new signings or will you give youth players the chance to turn into the stars of the future Do you have the man management skills to keep your team happy, confident and hungry for glory? Can you achieve the Ultimate goal of winning the European Champions League? With 224 fully update squads available to manage, National team management at no extra charge and a detailed 20+ page report all for just £2.20 per turn, can you afford not to play?

For a free, no obligation Managers Report and Game Guide contact us: Phone / fax 01761 415 2521, **www.ultimate-europe.net** or simply return the coupon below to: **Ultimate Europe**, PO Box 2724, Radstock, BA3 2YU. (UK & N. Ireland only)

Name ..... **Tel No** (optional) .....

Address .....

..... **Postcode** .....

I wish to take on the challenge of managing one of the following teams.

1. ..... 2. ..... 3. ..... 4. .....

If none of these teams are available I would like to manage a team from the following leagues;

Eng ☐ Ita ☐ Spa ☐ Sco ☐ Fra ☐ Ger ☐ Hol ☐ Por ☐

I wish to lead one of Europe's elite to the heights of domestic and European success. ☐

I want the challenge of leading one of Europe's smaller clubs to fame and glory. ☐

Think you have what it takes to be a football manager?

Could you take your team to the top? *Prove it!* New and improved Ultra Manager is an exciting and challenging play-by-mail played by football fans, against football fans.

Live the dream and take the challenge!

Plus: World Cup 2006 Management.

For a free start up pack, contact:

Ultra Manager, 26/3 Calder Gardens, Sighthill, Edinburgh EH11 4JR
Tel: 01665 510420
Email: info@ultramanager.co.uk

www.ultramanager.co.uk

FASHION

PRO-DIRECT SOCCER
www.prodirectsoccer.com

adidas +F50 TUNIT

The adidas +F50.6 Pro Editions have been carefully configured to maximise the full Pro advantages of **Speed, Movement and Agility**. The '**Pro Lite**' models offered on these pages all benefit from the exclusive use of the '**Lightweight Speed Chassis**' for maximum '**Speed Advantage**'.

All models are supplied in component form and comprise 1 pair of uppers, 1 pair of chassis and a stud set of either Soft Ground, Firm Ground or Hard Ground together with an +F50 assembly tool. Pro Personalisation is also available from £19.95

Available March 1st Pre-Order Now!

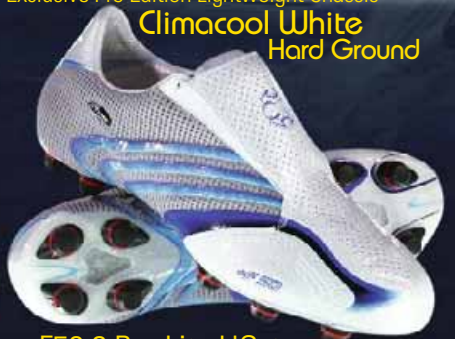
adidas +f50.6 Tunit
Pro Lite Exclusive Editions

Exclusive Pro Edition Lightweight Chassis

Electricity/Collegiate Royal
Soft Ground

Field Green/Silver
Firm Ground

Climacool White
Hard Ground



+F50.6 Pro-Lite SG Electricity
£109.99 sizes: 5-13inc ½'s

+F50.6 Pro-Lite FG Green
£109.99 sizes: 5-13inc ½'s

+F50.6 Pro-Lite HG Climacool
£109.99 sizes: 5-13inc ½'s

Available March 1st Pre-Order Now!

adidas +f50.6 Tunit
Pro Lite Editions

Exclusive Pro Edition Lightweight Chassis

Collegiate Royal/Electricity
Soft Ground

Black/Metallic Silver
Firm Ground

White/Master Blue/Zenith
Hard Ground

+F50.6 Pro-Lite SG Blue
£109.99 sizes: 5-13inc ½'s

+F50.6 Pro-Lite FG Black
£109.99 sizes: 5-13inc ½'s

+F50.6 Pro-Lite HG White
£109.99 sizes: 5-13inc ½'s

www.prodirectsoccer.com 0870 60 80 442
super-fast soccer mail-order

MISCELLANEOUS

Wind-Ups! www.classicwindups.co.uk

It's easy!....
1. Ring the number below.
2. Select the windup best suited to your victim.
3. Key in their phone number (mobiles allowed).
4. Listen in live as we wind them up!

1. Your Mobile Has Been Stolen ...and we're going to have to de-activate it in 5 minutes!
2. The Sex Disease Clinic ...Doctor needs a chat 'coz the Ex has something nasty!
3. Is Quentin There? ...listen as we wind them up with repeated calls from different people.
4. It's The Phone Engineer ...doing a test, laugh as your victim to sings and shouts!
5. Wrong Number! ...not a happy chap, your victim called him at a bad time!
6. A Special Delivery For You ...calling to arrange delivery of dodgy products off the net!
7. You're Live On The Radio ...it's the radio producer - your victim is live on air in 30secs!
8. The Dating Agency ...here are your victim's first responses to their new ad!
9. It's Reality TV ...someone dropped out - they need a replacement NOW!

0905 000 3077
calls cost £1.50 pence per minute
Classic Wind Ups, Suite 524, 14 Clifton Down Road, Bristol BS8 4BF

FUNNY WINDUPS

1. Your Mobile Has Been Stolen
2. The Health Clinic
3. Is Quentin There?
4. It's The Phone Engineer
5. Wrong Number!
6. A Special Delivery For You
7. You're Live On The Radio
8. The Dating Agency
9. It's Reality TV

It's Easy, Fast and Fun
1. Ring the number below
2. Select the Windup that best suits your victim
3. Key in their number (mobiles allowed)
4. Hear their reaction as you listen in!!

0905 000 3077
Calls cost £1.50 pence per minute. Classic Wind Ups, Suite 524, 14 Clifton Down Road, Bristol BS8 4BF

WORLD CUP

WORLD CUP FINALS
GERMANY 2006
Want to be there?
The cheapest way to see the World Cup games! From £99
Travel by super luxury coaches! Local departures!
Soccerexpress.co.uk
Tel: 0870 603 0028 or 0870 756 3874

VINE/CINE FILMS

www.RareSoccerVideos.com
Thousands of old games from the past
Watch the outstanding players and the best teams
Pele Maradonna Beckenbauer Cruyff and others
Relive the memories of those great games
vhs-pal, vhs-ntsc, dvd, world wide shipping
www.RareSoccerVideos.com

1000 games 1000 games 1000 games
1000 games 1953-2005 free lists.
Sammi Cheung, Flat 178, 6 Wilmslow Raod, Manchester M14 5TD.
Tel: 07916 364285.
Email: sammi271@btinternet.com

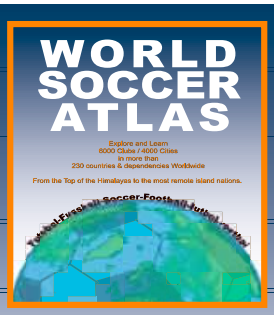
100'S OF AUTOGRAPHED pictures, players past and present. Also programmes etc. Tel: 01727 766 735

Please Mention **WORLD SOCCER** *When replying to advertisements*

It's our passion
It's our dream
Official club shirts from the Spanish league
www.laligashop.com

PUBLICATIONS

NEW!
WORLD SOCCER ATLAS
6000 Clubs
4000 Cities
230 Countries
Learn & Explore Soccer Worldwide!



New World Soccer Atlas Coming in October English Version
Register for Pre Sale List at www.Soccerexplorers.com

Eden Books
The Football Book Specialists
Tel - 01507 466150
View images of every book online at edenbooks.com or write for our FREE illustrated catalogue. We stock quality 1st and updated editions in their original covers
Rare and Collectable BIOGRAPHIES - CLUB HISTORIES - NON LEAGUE - ANNUALS -ROTHMANS - YEARBOOKS INTERNATIONAL - CUP - REFERENCE, STATISTICS.
EDEN BOOKS (WS) PO BOX 38, ALFORD, LN13 3AB ENGLAND

FASHION

tshirtgrill.com
Simply Superb T-Shirts and more!
The Clash Out of Control Rare 80's Design
Vietnam We Were Winning When I Left
Big Mistake
BIG SALE NOW ON!
T-shirts From Only £2.99 each!
SECURE ON-LINE ORDERING
FULL MONEY BACK GUARANTEE
0800 035 0241
Loads more exclusive designs at
www.tshirtgrill.com

CHARGRILLED® t-shirts

GO THERE, DO IT, BUY THE T-SHIRT

www.chargrilled.co.uk or call 0800 7835299

10% OFF VOUCHER UNIQUE TO READERS OF WORLD SOCCER MAGAZINE

TO RECEIVE YOUR 10% DISCOUNT ENTER THE CODE ' WDSR10 ' AT CHECKOUT

FREE WORLDWIDE POSTAGE - T SHIRTS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN TIN CANS
ALL T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE IN MANY COLOURS AND SIZES, ALL FOR £12.99.
DESIGNS ALSO AVAILABLE ON HOODIES, LONG SLEEVED T'S AND WOMEN'S T'S

WORLD SERVICE

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

Final

Feb 10 - Cairo

Egypt 0
Ivory Coast 0

Aet. **Att:** 74,000. **Ref:** Daami (Tun)
Egypt 4-2 on pens

Egypt:
El-Hadary - Gomaa (Fathi 21), Abdel Wahab, I Said (Ali 113), El-Saqqa, A Hassan, Aboutraika, Shawki, Barakat, Zaki, Moteab (Moustafa 82).

Ivory Coast:
Tizie - K Toure, Boka, Eboue, Blaise Kouassi, Fae, Y Toure (B Kone 91), Akale (Kalou 60), Zokora, Drogba, A Kone.

Penalty shoot-out: *(Egypt first)*
A Hassan 1-0, Drogba (saved) 1-0;
Abdel Wahab 2-0, K Toure 2-1;
Ali (missed) 2-1, B Kone (saved) 2-1;
Zaki 3-1, Eboue 3-2;
Aboutraika 4-2.

Gimme five…veteran striker Hossam Hassan holds the trophy after Egypt win the Nations Cup for a record fifth time

Group A

Jan 20 - Cairo
Egypt 3 (Hossam 17, Aboutraika 22, A Hassan 76)
Libya 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 65,000. **Ref:** Pare (BuF)
Egypt: El-Hadary - Gomaa, Abdel Wahab (T El-Sayed 88), I Said, El-Saqqa, A Hassan, Aboutraika (Moustafa 75), Shawki, Barakat, Hossam, Zaki (Moteab 80).
Libya: Agustini - Dawood, Alshibani, Hamadi, Maklouf, Muntaser (Ghzalla 75), Slil, Atrhoni, Saed (El-Taib 63), Ramli, Rewani. *Sent off: Agustini 74min.*

Jan 21 - Cairo
Morocco 0
Ivory Coast 1 (Drogba pen 37)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Damon (SAf)
Morocco: El-Jarmouni - El-Kaddouri, Naybet, El-Karkouri, Chippo, Regragui, Y Hadji, Kharja (Boussaboun 83), Yaacoubi (Aboucherouane 85), Safri, Chamakh.
Ivory Coast: Tizie - K Toure, Boka, Eboue, Blaise Kouassi, Fae, Y Toure, Akale, Zokora, Kalou (B Kone 75), Drogba (A Kone 65).

Jan 24 - Cairo
Libya 1 (Khamis 41)
Ivory Coast 2 (Drogba 10, Y Toure 74)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 42,000. **Ref:** Maidin (Sin)
Libya: Ghzalla - Alshibani, Hamadi, W Osman, Shushan, Muntaser (Rewani 72), El-Taib (Saed 78), Khamis, Ramli (Hussen 83), Atrhoni, Karra.
Ivory Coast: Tizie - Meite, K Toure, Boka, Zoro, Y Toure (Fae 88), Akale, Zokora, Yapi Yapo (Kalou 69), Drogba, A Kone (B Kone 82).

Jan 24 - Cairo
Egypt 0
Morocco 0
Att: 75,000. **Ref:** Codjia (Ben)
Egypt: El-Hadary - Gomaa, Abdel Wahab, Fathi (Moustafa 49), I Said, El-Saqqa, A Hassan (Aboutraika 66), Shawki, Barakat, Hossam (Moteab 79), Zaki.
Morocco: El-Jarmouni - Naybet, El-Karkouri, Regragui (Chippo 76), Y Hadji (Boussaboun 71), El-Kaddouri, Kharja, Erbati, Yaacoubi, Safri, Chamakh (Aboucherouane 84).

Jan 28 - Cairo
Egypt 3 (Moteab 8, 70, Aboutraika 61)
Ivory Coast 1 (A Kone 43)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 74,000. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
Egypt: El-Hadary - Gomaa, Abdel Wahab (T El-Sayed 64), I Said, El-Saqqa, A Hassan, Aboutraika (Moustafa 76), Shawki, Barakat, Hossam (H Hassan 24), Moteab.
Ivory Coast: Tizie (Barry 59) - C Domoraud, Eboue, Blaise Kouassi, Demel (B Kone 67), Tiene, Fae, Y Toure (Akale 85), Kalou, N'Dri, A Kone.

Jan 28 - Cairo
Libya 0
Morocco 0
Att: 5,000. **Ref:** Daami (Tun)
Libya: Agustini - Dawood, Hamadi, W Osman, Shushan, El-Taib, Khamis, Ramli, Atrhoni, Saed, Karra.
Morocco: El-Jarmouni - Naybet, El-Karkouri, Regragui, Y Hadji, El-Kaddouri, Kharja, Yaacoubi (Madihi 73), Safri (Erbati 86), Chamakh, Aboucherouane (Boussaboun 58).

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Egypt	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
Ivory Coast	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
Morocco	3	0	2	1	0	1	2
Libya	3	0	1	2	1	5	1

Group B

Jan 21 - Cairo
Cameroon 3 (Eto'o 21, 39, 78)
Angola 1 (Flavio pen 31)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Guezzaz (Mor)
Cameroon: Souleymanou - Song, Kalla, Atouba, Geremi, Saidou, Makoun, Ngom Kome (Olembe 83), Eto'o (Emana 89), Webo (Boya 75), Douala.
Angola: Joao Ricardo - Jamba, Jacinto, Lebo-Lebo, Marco Abreu (Delgado 72), Andre, Figueiredo, Mendonca, Edson (Ze Kalanga 65), Flavio (Mantorras 60), Akwa.

Jan 21 - Cairo
Togo 0
DR Congo 2 (Mputu 42, Lua Lua 61)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Daami (Tun)
Togo: Agassa - Abalo, Senaya, Mathias, Z Atte-Oudeyi, Akoto, Aziawonou, Romao (M Salifou 55), C T Mamam (Dogbe 85), Cougbadja, Olufade (Adebayor 59).
DR Congo: Kalemba - H Ilunga, Kinkela, Bokese, Kabundi, Mbayo, Tshiolola, Matumona (Ilongo 84), Mbala (Kabamba 86), Mputu (Matingou 62), Lua Lua.

Jan 25 - Cairo
Angola 0
DR Congo 0
Att: 2,000. **Ref:** Diatta (Sen)
Angola: Joao Ricardo - Jamba, Kali, Delgado, Andre, Loco, Figueiredo (Miloy 75), Mendonca (Jonhson 47), Edson, Flavio (Maurito 49), Akwa.
DR Congo: Kalemba - H Ilunga, Kinkela, Bokese, Kabundi, Mbayo (Milambo 90), Tshiolola, Matumona (Matingou 68), Mbala (Kasongo 82), Mputu, Lua Lua. *Sent off: Mputu 19min.*

Jan 25 - Cairo
Cameroon 2 (Eto'o 68, Meyong Ze 86)
Togo 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Sowe (Gam)
Cameroon: Souleymanou - Song, Kalla (Bikey 55), Atouba, Geremi, Saidou, Makoun, Ngom Kome, Eto'o, Webo (Meyong Ze 69), Douala (Olembe 75).
Togo: Agassa - Abalo, Senaya (Romao 80), Mathias, Assemoassa, Aziawonou (Olufade 84), Tchangai, C T Mamam (Cougbadja 71), Kassim, M Salifou, Adebayor.

Jan 29 - Cairo
Angola 3 (Flavio 9, 39, Maurito 86)
Togo 2 (Cougbadja 24, C T Mamam 67)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** El-Arjoun (Mor)
Angola: Joao Ricardo - Jamba, Kali, Loco (Love 72), Delgado, Andre, Maurito, Figueiredo, Edson (Ze Kalanga 55), Flavio, Akwa (Mantorras 61).
Togo: Tchagnirou - Abalo, Senaya (Olufade 85), Assemoassa, G Mamam, Tchangai, Romao (Aziawonou 60), C T Mamam, Kassim, M Salifou (Sherif 78), Cougbadja. *Sent off: Kassim 29min.*

Jan 29 - Cairo
Cameroon 2 (Geremi 31, Eto'o 33)
DR Congo 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Coulibaly (Mli)
Cameroon: Kameni - Song, Angbwa, Bikey, Ateba, Olembe (Feutchine 89), Geremi, Saidou, Eto'o, Meyong Ze (Webo 46), Boya (Emana 64).
DR Congo: Kalemba - H Ilunga, Kinkela, Bokese, Kabundi, Mbayo (Kabamba 46), Tshiolola, Matumona, Mbala (Mubiala 79), Lelo (Milambo 46), Lua Lua. *Sent off: Bokese 70min.*

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon	3	3	0	0	7	1	9
DR Congo	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Angola	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Togo	3	0	0	3	2	7	0

Group C

Jan 22 - Alexandria
Tunisia 4 (Santos 35, 82, 90, Bouazizi 51)
Zambia 1 (Chamanga 9)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 16,000. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - H Trabelsi, Jaidi, Hagui, Clayton (Ayari 69), Chedli, Ghodhbane, Bouazizi, Melliti (Namouchi 79), Santos, Jaziri (Mnari 72).
Zambia: Kolola - Hachilensa, Musonda, Nketani, Tana, Numba (F Katongo 65), C Katongo, Chansa (Sinkala 65), Chamanga, Mbesuma, Njovu (Kalaba 88).

Jan 22 - Alexandria
South Africa 0
Guinea 2 (S Bangoura 76, O Bangoura 87)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Benouza (Alg)
South Africa: Marlin - Issa, Mabizela, Katza, Tau, D Tshabalala, Vilakazi, B McCarthy, Nomvete (S Tshabalala 57), L Mokoena (Nkosi 66), Zuma.
Guinea: Diarso - Balde, I Camara, K Sylla, Kalabane, Jabi, Feindouno, Thiam, Diawara (S Bangoura 69), Mansare (O Bangoura 83), Ismael Bangoura (Ibrahima Bangoura 73).

Jan 26 - Alexandria
Zambia 1 (Tana 34)
Guinea 2 (Feindouno pen 74, 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 24,000. **Ref:** Imiere (Nig)
Zambia: Kolola - Musonda, Nketani, Billy Mwanza, Tana, Sinkala, C Katongo, Chamanga, F Katongo (Chansa 77), Mbesuma, Njovu.
Guinea: Diarso - Balde, I Camara, Kalabane, Jabi, M Sylla, Feindouno, Thiam (K Sylla 90), Mansare, Ibrahima Bangoura (Yattara 55), S Bangoura (Diawara 75).

Jan 26 - Alexandria
Tunisia 2 (Santos 32, Benachour 57)
South Africa 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Evehe (Cam)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - H Trabelsi, Jaidi, Ayari, Hagui, Chedli, Mnari, Benachour (Jemaa 78), Namouchi, Santos (Gmamdia 82), Ben Saada.
South Africa: Marlin - Issa, Mabizela, Katza (Gaxa 65), Mere, Van Heerden (Mphela 81), D Tshabalala, Vilakazi, B McCarthy, Nomvete, Zuma (Nkosi 73).

Jan 30 - Alexandria
Tunisia 0
Guinea 3 (O Bangoura 16, Feindouno 69, Diawara 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Maidin (Sin)
Tunisia: Kasraoui - Clayton, Jaidi (Hagui 59), Haj Massaoud, Merdassi, Ghodhbane, Mnari, Melliti, Namouchi (Chedli 79), Gmamdia, Ltifi (Jemaa 55). *Sent off: Merdassi 83min.*
Guinea: Diarso - K Sylla, Kalabane (I Camara 57), Diallo, Kaba, Morlaye Cisse, O Bangoura (S Camara 79), Souare, Diawara, Ismael Bangoura, Yattara (Feindouno 56).

Jan 30 - Alexandria
Zambia 1 (C Katongo 75)
South Africa 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Abd El Fattah (Egy)
Zambia: Mweene - Hachilensa, Musonda, Nketani, Tana, Sinkala, C Katongo, Chamanga, F Katongo (Phiri 64), Mbesuma (Chalwe 77), Njovu (Bakala 69).
South Africa: Marlin - Issa, Mabizela, Masilela, Tau, D Tshabalala (Van Heerden 63), S Tshabalala, Gumbi, Nkosi (L Mokoena 80), Nomvete (Makhanya 68), Mphela.

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea	3	3	0	0	7	1	9
Tunisia	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Zambia	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
South Africa	3	0	0	3	0	5	0

Group D

Jan 23 - Port Said
Nigeria 1 (Taiwo 86)
Ghana 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Abd El Fatah (Egy)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Ayila, Odiah, Taiwo, Yobo, Enakarhire, Oruma, Obodo (Nwaneri 89), Aghahowa (N Kanu 80), Martins, Odemwingie (Nsofor 83).
Ghana: S Adjei - S Kuffour, Mensah, Paintsil, Pappoe (Frimpong 89), Ahmed, Dramani, Appiah, Yakubu (Sarpei 75), Kingston, M Amoah.

Jan 23 - Port Said
Zimbabwe 0
Senegal 2 (H Camara 60, I Ba 80)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Abdel Rahman (Sud)
Zimbabwe: Muzadzi - Mbwando, Makonese, J Matola, Nyandoro, Chimedza, Dinha (Nengomasha 61), Kasinauyo (Badza 85), Mwaruwari, Kawondera, P Ndlovu (Luphahla 67).
Senegal: Sylva - Beye, Coly, Diatta, Diawara, Diagne-Faye, A Faye (P B Diop 85), E H Diouf (I Ba 79), H Camara, Barry, Kamara (Niang 63).

Jan 27 - Port Said
Ghana 1 (M Amoah 13)
Senegal 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** El-Arjoun (Mor)
Ghana: S Adjei - Mensah, Paintsil, Pappoe, Ahmed, Dramani, Appiah (Edusei 90), Yakubu, Kingston, M Amoah (Tagoe 87), Frimpong (Mohammed 83). *Sent off: Kingston 62min.*
Senegal: Sylva - Beye, Coly, Diatta, Diawara, Diagne-Faye (P B Diop 46), A Faye, I Ba (Kamara 67), Barry, E H Diouf (Niang 66), H Camara. *Sent off: Beye 62min.*

Jan 27 - Port Said
Nigeria 2 (Obodo 57, Mikel 61)
Zimbabwe 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Coulibaly (Mli)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Ayila, Odiah, Taiwo, Yobo, Enakarhire, Oruma (Mikel 54), Obodo (Lawal 86), Aghahowa (N Kanu 54), Utaka, Martins.
Zimbabwe: Muzadzi - Makonese, J Matola, Nengomasha, Nyandoro, Yohane, Luphahla (Mushangazhike 87), Chimedza, Dinha (B Ndlovu 70), Mwaruwari, Kawondera (P Ndlovu 79).

Jan 31 - Port Said
Nigeria 2 (Martins 79, 88)
Senegal 1 (S Camara 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Damon (SAf)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Ayila, Odiah, Taiwo, Yobo, Enakarhire, Obodo (Lawal 57), Mikel, Makinwa (N Kanu 53), Utaka (Nsofor 77), Martins.
Senegal: Sylva - Coly (Diakhate 67), Daf, Diatta, Diawara, A Faye, P B Diop, E H Diouf, H Camara, Barry (S Camara 44), Kamara (Diagne-Faye 78).

Jan 31 - Ismailia
Ghana 1 (Armando 90)
Zimbabwe 2 (Chimedza 60, Mwaruwari 68)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Louzaya (Con)
Ghana: S Adjei - Mensah, Paintsil, Pappoe, Edusei, Appiah, Yakubu (Mohammed 56), Ahmed, Dramani (Attram 65), Tagoe (Armando 46), Frimpong.
Zimbabwe: Kapini - Makonese, J Matola, Nengomasha, Nyandoro, Luphahla, Chimedza, Dinha, Mwaruwari, Mushangazhike (Kawondera 86), P Ndlovu (Kasinauyo 51).

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria	3	3	0	0	5	1	9
Senegal	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
Ghana	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
Zimbabwe	3	1	0	2	2	5	3

Quarter-finals

Feb 3 - Alexandria
Guinea 2 (Diawara 24, Feindouno 90)
Senegal 3 (P B Diop 60, Niang 82, H Camara 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 17,000. **Ref:** Codjia (Ben)
Guinea: Diarso - Balde, I Camara, Kalabane, K Sylla, Jabi, O Bangoura (Ismael Bangoura 81), Feindouno, Thiam (Souare 53), Diawara (S Bangoura 68), Mansare.
Senegal: Sylva - Coly (Diakhate 39), Daf, Diatta, Diawara, A Faye, P B Diop, H Camara, S Camara (Niang 58), Kamara, Mendy (I Ba 87).

Feb 3 - Cairo
Egypt 4 (A Hassan pen 33, 88, H Hassan 40, Moteab 57)
DR Congo 1 (El-Saqqa og 45)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 74,000. **Ref:** Sowe (Gam)
Egypt: El-Hadary - Gomaa, I Said, El-Saqqa, A Hassan, T El-Sayed (Abdel Wahab 78), Shawki, Barakat, H Hassan (Moustafa 65), Zaki (Ali 73), Moteab.
DR Congo: Kalemba - H Ilunga, Mubiala (Lubanzadio 46), Nsumbu, Kinkela, Mbayo, Tshiolola, Kasongo (Kabamba 53), Matumona, Mbala, Lua Lua.

Feb 4 - Port Said
Nigeria 1 (Nsofor 6)
Tunisia 1 (Hagui 49)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 15,000.
Ref: Maillet (Sey)
Nigeria 6-5 on pens
Nigeria: Enyeama - Ayila, Odiah (Nwaneri 96), Taiwo, Yobo, Enakarhire, Mikel, Makinwa (Lawal 92), Utaka (N Kanu 58), Martins, Nsofor.
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Clayton, H Trabelsi (Haj Massaoud 46), Jaidi, Hagui, Chedli, Bouazizi, Melliti (Benachour 67), Namouchi, Santos (Gmamdia 80), Jaziri.

Feb 4 - Cairo
Cameroon 1 (Meyong Ze 94)
Ivory Coast 1 (B Kone 91)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0. **Att:** 4,000.
Ref: Codjia (Ben)
Ivory Coast 12-11 on pens
Cameroon: Souleymanou - Song, Atouba, Bikey, Olembe (Douala 79), Geremi, Saidou, Makoun, Ngom Kome, Eto'o, Webo (Meyong Ze 32).
Ivory Coast: Tizie - K Toure, Boka, Eboue (Zoro 111), Blaise Kouassi, Fae, Y Toure (B Kone 87), Akale (N'Dri 98), Zokora, Drogba, A Kone.

Semi-finals

Feb 7 - Cairo
Egypt 2 (A Hassan pen 37, Zaki 81)
Senegal 1 (Niang 51)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 74,000. **Ref:** Evehe (Cam)
Egypt: El-Hadary - Gomaa, Abdel Wahab, I Said, El-Saqqa, A Hassan, Aboutraika, Shawki, Barakat, Hossam (Zaki 78), Moteab (H Hassan 90).
Senegal: Sylva - Daf (I Ba 88), Diatta, Diawara, Diakhate, A Faye, P B Diop, Mendy (S Camara 85), H Camara (E H Diouf 66), Niang, Kamara.

Feb 7 - Alexandria
Ivory Coast 1 (Drogba 47)
Nigeria 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Damon (SAf)
Ivory Coast: Tizie - Meite, Boka, K Toure, Eboue (Zoro 66), Y Toure, Zokora, Yapi Yapo (Fae 59), Kalou (A Kone 76), Drogba, N'Dri.
Nigeria: Enyeama - Odiah, Taiwo, Yobo, Enakarhire, Mikel (Okocha 53), Kaita, N Kanu (Aghahowa 73), Nsofor, Martins, Odemwingie (Makinwa 63).

Third-place play-off

Feb 9 - Cairo
Senegal 0
Nigeria 1 (Lawal 79)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,354. **Ref:** Coulibaly (Mli)
Senegal: M Diouf - Daf, Diagne-Faye, Ndaw, Drame, Diakhate, Djiba (P B Diop 62), I Ba, Barry (H Camara 69), S Camara (Niang 77), Kamara.
Nigeria: Enyeama - Odiah, Taiwo, Nwaneri, Yobo, Okocha (Oruma 67), Lawal, Obodo, Utaka, Martins, Nsofor (N Kanu 78).

Airborne…Henri Camara leaps over Guinea's Bobo Balde during Senegal's 3-2 quarter-final win in Alexandria

Squads

ANGOLA

GOALKEEPERS
12 ANGELO (AS Aviacao)
22 GOLIATH (Sagrada Esperanca)
1 JOAO RICARDO (unattached)

DEFENDERS
21 DELGADO (Primeiro Agosto)
2 JACINTO (AS Aviacao)
3 JAMBA (AS Aviacao)
5 KALI (Barreirense, Por)
4 LEBO-LEBO (Sagrada Esperanca)
20 LOCO (Benfica Luanda)
23 MARCO ABREU (Portimonense, Por)

MIDFIELDERS
8 ANDRE (Kuwait SC, Kuw)
13 EDSON (Pacos Ferreira, Por)
7 FIGUEIREDO (Varzim, Por)
11 JONHSON (Portuguesa, Bra)
14 MENDONCA (Varzim, Por)
6 MILOY (InterClube)
17 ZE KALANGA (Petro Atletico)

FORWARDS
10 AKWA (Al Wakra, Qat)
19 Andre BUENGO (Clermont Foot, Fra)
16 FLAVIO (Al Ahly, Egy)
18 LOVE (AS Aviacao)
9 MANTORRAS (Benfica, Por)
15 MAURITO (Al Wahda, UAE)

COACH: Luis Oliveira GONCALVES

Angelo replaced LAMA (Petro Atletico)
Jonhson replaced GILBERTO (Al Ahly, Egy)

CAMEROON

GOALKEEPERS
17 Pierre EBEDE (Panathinaikos, Gre)
1 Idris Carlos KAMENI (Espanyol, Spa)
16 Hamidou SOULEYMANOU (Denizlispor, Tur)

DEFENDERS
6 Benoit ANGBWA (Kryliya Sovetov, Rus)
2 Jean-Hugues Bilayi ATEBA (Paris SG, Fra)
3 Timothee ATOUBA (Hamburg, Ger)
23 Andre BIKEY (Lokomotiv Moscow, Rus)
12 Armand DEUMI (Thun, Swi)
8 GEREMI Njitap (Chelsea, Eng)
5 Raymond KALLA (Sivasspor, Tur)
4 Rigobert SONG (Galatasaray, Tur)

MIDFIELDERS
19 Eric DJEMBA DJEMBA (Aston Villa, Eng)
10 Achille EMANA (Toulouse, Fra)
13 Guy FEUTCHINE (PAOK Salonika, Gre)
11 Jean MAKOUN (Lille, Fra)
7 Daniel NGOM KOME (Murcia, Spa)
20 Salomon OLEMBE (Al Rayyan, Qat)
14 Alioum SAIDOU (Galatasaray, Tur)

FORWARDS
21 Pierre BOYA (Partizan Belgrade, Ser)
18 Roudolphe DOUALA (Sporting Lisbon, Por)
9 Samuel ETO'O (Barcelona, Spa)
22 Albert MEYONG ZE (Belenenses, Por)
15 Achille WEBO (Osasuna, Spa)

COACH: Artur JORGE (Por)

DR CONGO

GOALKEEPERS
23 Francis CHANSA (Orlando Pirates, SAf)
1 Pascal KALEMBA (Manga Sport, Gab)
16 Dikete TAPUNGU (Umtata Bush Bucks, SAf)

DEFENDERS
18 Gladys BOKESE (Daring Club Motema Pembe)
15 Herita ILUNGA (Saint-Etienne, Fra)
20 Felicien KABUNDI (TP Mazembe Englebert)
21 Ngandu KASONGO (TP Mazembe Englebert)
7 Christian KINKELA (Amiens, Fra)
13 Nono LUBANZADIO (SC Cilu)
2 Cyrille MUBIALA (Ajax Cape Town, SAf)
3 Dituabanza NSUMBU (AS Vita)
4 Tshinyama TSHIOLOLA (Ajax Cape Town, SAf)

MIDFIELDERS
14 Ngasanya ILONGO (Daring Club Motema Pembe)
19 Jean-Paul KAMUDIMBA (Grimsby, Eng)
12 Franck MATINGOU (Bastia, Fra)
10 Zola MATUMONA (AS Vita)
11 Marcel MBAYO (Sakaryaspor, Tur)
6 Mutamba MILAMBO (Le Havre, Fra)
8 Tresor MPUTU (TP Mazembe Englebert)

FORWARDS
22 Tshatsho KABAMBA (Istanbulspor, Tur)
17 Mbele LELO (Orlando Pirates, SAf)
9 Lomana LUA LUA (Portsmouth, Eng)
5 Biscotte MBALA (Yverdon, Swi)

COACH: Claude LE ROY (Fra)

EGYPT

GOALKEEPERS
1 Essam EL-HADARY (Al Ahly)
16 Abdelwahed EL-SAYED (Zamalek)
23 Mohamed Abdel MONSEF (Zamalek)

DEFENDERS
3 Mohamed ABDEL WAHAB (Al Ahly)
5 Abdelzaher EL-SAQQA (Konyaspor, Tur)
2 Ahmed EL-SAYED (Al Ahly)
13 Tarek EL-SAYED (Zamalek)
20 Wael GOMAA (Al Ahly)
4 Ibrahim SAID (Zamalek)

MIDFIELDERS
21 Ahmed Eid ABDEL MALEK (Haras El Hodoud)
22 Mohamed ABOUTRAIKA (Al Ahly)
12 Mohamed BARAKAT (Al Ahly)
8 Motaz EANO (Zamalek)
7 Ahmed FATHI (Ismaili)
17 Ahmed HASSAN (Besiktas, Tur)
6 Hassan MOUSTAFA (Al Ahly)
18 Samir SABRY (ENPPI)
11 Mohamed SHAWKI (Al Ahly)

FORWARDS
14 Abdelhalim ALI (Zamalek)
9 Hossam HASSAN (Al Masry)
15 Ahmed HOSSAM (Tottenham, Eng)
10 Emad MOTEAB (Al Ahly)
19 Amr ZAKI (ENPPI)

COACH: Hassan SHEHATA

Eano replaced Hosni ABD RABO (Strasbourg, Fra)
Sabry replaced Osama HOSNI (Al Ahly)

GHANA

GOALKEEPERS
1 Sammy ADJEI (MS Ashdod, Isr)
22 Philemon McCARTHY (Fetteh Feyenoord)
16 George OWU (Ashanti Gold)

DEFENDERS
21 Issah AHMED (Asante Kotoko)
2 Aziz ANSAH (Asante Kotoko)
11 Francis DICKOH (Nordsjaelland, Den)
17 Daniel EDUSEI (Aigaleo, Gre)
4 Samuel Osei KUFFOUR (Roma, Ita)
5 John MENSAH (Cremonese, Ita)
15 John PAINTSIL (Hapoel Tel Aviv, Isr)
6 Emmanuel PAPPOE (Hapoel Kfar Saba, Isr)
8 Hans SARPEI (Wolfsburg, Ger)

MIDFIELDERS
10 Stephen APPIAH (Fenerbahce, Tur)
23 Haminu DRAMANI (Red Star Belgrade, Ser)
7 Laryea KINGSTON (Terek Grozny, Rus)
19 Hamza MOHAMMED (Real Tamale Utd)
18 Abubakari YAKUBU (Vitesse Arnhem, Hol)

FORWARDS
3 Louis AGYEMANG (Kaizer Chiefs, SAf)
14 Matthew AMOAH (Borussia Dortmund, Ger)
20 Baba ARMANDO (Kryliya Sovetov, Rus)
12 Godwin ATTRAM (Al Shabab, Sau)
13 Joetex FRIMPONG (Enyimba, Nig)
9 Prince TAGOE (Hearts of Oak)

COACH: Ratomir DUJKOVIC (Ser)

GUINEA

GOALKEEPERS
16 Aboubacar BANGOURA (Chateauneuf, Fra)
22 Kemoko CAMARA (Hafia)
1 Naby DIARSO (Satellite)

DEFENDERS
5 Bobo BALDE (Celtic, Sco)
3 Ibrahima CAMARA (Parma, Ita)
12 Morlaye CISSE (Sedan, Fra)
17 Mamadou Alimou DIALLO (Lokeren, Blg)
21 Daouda JABI (Ajaccio, Fra)
4 Mamadi KABA (Gueugnon, Fra)
15 Oumar KALABANE (Auxerre, Fra)

MIDFIELDERS
13 Ousmane BANGOURA (Charleroi, Blg)
23 Sekouba CAMARA (AS Kaloum)
7 Fode MANSARE (Toulouse, Fra)
14 Ibrahima SOUARE (Jura Sud Foot, Fra)
8 Kanfory SYLLA (Ethnikos, Gre)
18 Mohamed SYLLA (Leicester, Eng)
6 Pablo THIAM (Wolfsburg, Ger)

FORWARDS
11 Ibrahima BANGOURA (Troyes, Fra)
10 Ismael BANGOURA (Le Mans, Fra)
9 Sambegou BANGOURA (Stoke, Eng)
19 Kaba DIAWARA (Ajaccio, Fra)
2 Pascal FEINDOUNO (Saint-Etienne, Fra)
20 Ibrahima YATTARA (Trabzonspor, Tur)

COACH: Patrice NEVEU (Fra)

IVORY COAST

GOALKEEPERS
23 Boubacar BARRY (Beveren, Blg)
16 Gerard GNANHOUAN (Montpellier, Fra)
1 Jean-Jacques TIZIE (Esperance, Tun)

DEFENDERS
3 Arthur BOKA (Strasbourg, Fra)
17 Cyril DOMORAUD (Creteil, Fra)
21 Emmanuel EBOUE (Arsenal, Eng)
6 Blaise KOUASSI (Troyes, Fra)
12 Abdoulaye MEITE (Marseille, Fra)
4 Kolo TOURE (Arsenal, Eng)
13 Marc ZORO (Messina, Ita)

MIDFIELDERS
2 Kanga AKALE (Auxerre, Fra)
20 Guy DEMEL (Hamburg, Ger)
7 Emerse FAE (Nantes, Fra)
22 Romaric N'DRI (Le Mans, Fra)
18 Siaka TIENE (Saint-Etienne, Fra)
19 Yaya TOURE (Olympiakos, Gre)
10 Gilles YAPI YAPO (Nantes, Fra)
5 Didier ZOKORA (Saint-Etienne, Fra)

FORWARDS
15 Aruna DINDANE (Lens, Fra)
11 Didier DROGBA (Chelsea, Eng)
8 Bonaventure KALOU (Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
9 Arouna KONE (PSV Eindhoven, Hol)
14 Bakary KONE (Nice, Fra)

COACH: Henri MICHEL (Fra)

LIBYA

GOALKEEPERS
1 Samir ABBUD (Al Ittihad)
12 Luis Alejandro AGUSTINI (Al Ittihad)
21 Muftah GHZALLA (Al Ittihad)

DEFENDERS
22 Madi ALFITORI (Al Hilal)
5 Younes ALSHIBANI (Al Olympique)
4 Omar DAWOOD (JS Kabylie, Alg)
18 Osama HAMADI (Al Ittihad)
17 Mahmoud MAKLOUF (Al Ittihad)
2 Waled OSMAN (Al Ittihad)
13 Essam RAJAB (Al Olympique)
3 Naje SHUSHAN (Al Ittihad)

MIDFIELDERS
16 Nader ATRHONI (Al Sailiya, Qat)
14 Tarek EL-TAIB (Gaziantepspor, Tur)
8 Khaled HUSSEN (Al Nassr)
19 Abdesalam KHAMIS (Al Olympique)
7 Jehad MUNTASER (Treviso, Ita)
6 Marei RAMLI (Al Ittihad)
10 Ahmed SAED (Al Ahli Tripoli)
23 Abdulnaser SLIL (Al Ittihad)

FORWARDS
11 Ahmed EL-MASLI (Al Ittihad)
15 Nader KARRA (Al Ittihad)
20 Salem REWANI (Al Ittihad)
9 Ahmed ZUWAY (Al Ahli Benghazi)

COACH: Ilija LONCAREVIC (Cro)

MOROCCO

GOALKEEPERS
12 Mustapha CHADLI (Moghreb Tetouan)
1 Tarik EL-JARMOUNI (FAR Rabat)
22 Nadir LAMYAGHRI (Wydad Casablanca)

DEFENDERS
21 Badr EL-KADDOURI (Kyiv Dynamo, Ukr)
5 Talal EL-KARKOURI (Charlton, Eng)
3 Noureddine KACEMI (Grenoble, Fra)
6 Noureddine NAYBET (Tottenham, Eng)
4 Abdeslam OUADDOU (Rennes, Fra)
8 El Houssaine OUCHLA (FAR Rabat)
2 Oualid REGRAGUI (Racing Santander, Spa)

MIDFIELDERS
14 Hafid ABDESSADEK (FAR Rabat)
18 Youssef CHIPPO (Al Wakra, Qat)
16 Amine ERBATI (Al Wakra, Qat)
13 Houssine KHARJA (Roma, Ita)
10 Mohamed MADIHI (Wydad Casablanca)
15 Youssef SAFRI (Norwich, Eng)

FORWARDS
19 Hicham ABOUCHEROUANE (Lille, Fra)
23 Mohamed ARMOUMEN (Kuwait SC, Kuw)
9 Ali BOUSSABOUN (Feyenoord, Hol)
17 Marouane CHAMAKH (Bordeaux, Fra)
20 Youssef HADJI (Rennes, Fra)
11 Mohamed YAACOUBI (Osasuna, Spa)
7 Jaouad ZAIRI (Sochaux, Fra)

COACH: Mohamed FAKHIR

NIGERIA

GOALKEEPERS
23 Dele AIYENUGBA (Enyimba)
12 Austin EJIDE (Etoile Sahel, Tun)
1 Vincent ENYEAMA (Bnei Yehuda, Isr)

DEFENDERS
6 Joseph ENAKARHIRE (Dinamo Moscow, Rus)
21 Obinna NWANERI (Esperance, Tun)
5 Chidi ODIAH (CSKA Moscow, Rus)
3 Ismaila TAIWO (Marseille, Fra)
2 Joseph YOBO (Everton, Eng)

MIDFIELDERS
13 Yusuf AYILA (Kyiv Dynamo, Ukr)
22 Sani KAITA (Sparta Rotterdam, Hol)
11 Garba LAWAL (Iraklis, Gre)
8 John Obi MIKEL (Lyn, Nor)
15 Paul OBIEFULE (Viborg, Den)
18 Christian OBODO (Udinese, Ita)
10 Jay-Jay OKOCHA (Bolton, Eng)
16 Wilson ORUMA (Marseille, Fra)

FORWARDS
17 Julius AGHAHOWA (Shakhtar Donetsk, Ukr)
4 Nwankwo KANU (West Bromwich, Eng)
19 Stephen MAKINWA (Palermo, Ita)
9 Obafemi MARTINS (Internazionale, Ita)
14 Obinna NSOFOR (Chievo, Ita)
20 Peter ODEMWINGIE (Lille, Fra)
7 John UTAKA (Rennes, Fra)

COACH: Augustine EGUAVOEN

SENEGAL

GOALKEEPERS
16 Mamadou DIOUF (Jeanne d'Arc)
22 Cheikh Tidiane N'DIAYE (Rennes, Fra)
1 Tony SYLVA (Lille, Fra)

DEFENDERS
21 Habib BEYE (Marseille, Fra)
17 Ferdinand COLY (Parma, Ita)
2 Omar DAF (Sochaux, Fra)
4 Pape Malickou DIAKHATE (Nancy, Fra)
13 Lamine DIATTA (Lyon, Fra)
5 Souleymane DIAWARA (Sochaux, Fra)
18 Boukary DRAME (Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
3 Guirane NDAW (Sochaux, Fra)

MIDFIELDERS
10 Issa BA (Chateauroux, Fra)
6 Rahmane BARRY (Lorient, Fra)
20 Abdoulaye DIAGNE-FAYE (Bolton, Eng)
19 Pape Bouba DIOP (Fulham, Eng)
23 Dino DJIBA (Metz, Fra)
12 Amdy FAYE (Newcastle, Eng)
14 Frederic MENDY (Saint-Etienne, Fra)

FORWARDS
7 Henri CAMARA (Wigan, Eng)
9 Souleymane CAMARA (Nice, Fra)
11 El Hadji DIOUF (Bolton, Eng)
15 Diomansy KAMARA (West Bromwich, Eng)
8 Mamadou NIANG (Marseille, Fra)

COACH: Abdoulaye SARR

SOUTH AFRICA

GOALKEEPERS
16 Moneeb JOSEPHS (Ajax Cape Town)
1 Calvin MARLIN (SuperSport United)
22 Avril PHALI (Jomo Cosmos)

DEFENDERS
6 Siboniso GAXA (SuperSport United)
13 Pierre ISSA (OFI Crete, Gre)
4 Ricardo KATZA (SuperSport United)
5 Mbulelo MABIZELA (Valerenga, Nor)
19 Tshepo MASILELA (Premier United)
21 Vuyo MERE (Mamelodi Sundowns)
2 Jimmy TAU (Kaizer Chiefs)

MIDFIELDERS
8 Mlungisi GUMBI (Golden Arrows)
12 Joseph MAKHANYA (Orlando Pirates)
20 Siyabonga NKOSI (Bloemfontein Celtic)
3 Daniel TSHABALALA (Orlando Pirates)
7 Siphiwe TSHABALALA (Free State Stars)
11 Elrio VAN HEERDEN (FC Copenhagen, Den)
10 Benedict VILAKAZI (Orlando Pirates)

FORWARDS
17 Benni McCARTHY (FC Porto, Por)
23 Lebohang MOKOENA (Orlando Pirates)
18 Katlego MPHELA (SuperSport United)
9 Nkosinathi NHLEKO (Viking, Nor)
14 Siyabonga NOMVETE (Orlando Pirates)
15 Sibusiso ZUMA (Arminia Bielefeld, Ger)

COACH: Ted DUMITRU (Rom)

TOGO

GOALKEEPERS
16 Kossi AGASSA (Metz, Fra)
22 Safiou SALIFOU (Dyto Lome)
1 Ourou-Nimini TCHAGNIROU (Djoliba, Mli)

DEFENDERS
3 Jean-Paul Yaovi ABALO (Dunkerque, Fra)
12 Eric AKOTO (Admira, Aut)
20 Ludovic ASSEMOASSA (Murcia, Spa)
21 Zanzan ATTE-OUDEYI (Lokeren, Blg)
8 Gafarou MAMAM (FC 105 Libreville, Gab)
13 Emmanuel MATHIAS (Esperance, Tun)
2 Dare NIBOMBE (Mons, Blg)
5 Massamasso TCHANGAI (Benevento, Ita)

MIDFIELDERS
6 Yao AZIAWONOU (Young Boys, Swi)
23 Gouyazou KASSIM (Etoile Filante)
10 Cherif Toure MAMAM (Metz, Fra)
14 Adekanmi OLUFADE (Al Siliya, Qat)
15 Alaixys ROMAO (Louhans-Cuiseaux, Fra)
7 Moustapha SALIFOU (Brest, Fra)
18 Junior Yao SENAYA (YF Juventus, Swi)

FORWARDS
4 Emmanuel ADEBAYOR (Arsenal, Eng)
19 Alirou AHOUDOU (AS Douanes)
17 Kader COUGBADJA (Sochaux, Fra)
9 Mikael DOGBE (Bani Yas, UAE)
11 Cougbadja SHERIF (Concordia Irhove, Ger)

COACH: Stephen KESHI (Nig)

TUNISIA

GOALKEEPERS
1 Ali BOUMNIJEL (Club Africain)
16 Khaled FADHEL (Kayserispor, Tur)
22 Hamdi KASRAOUI (Esperance)

DEFENDERS
19 Anis AYARI (Samsunspor, Tur)
20 Jose CLAYTON (Qatar SC, Qat)
3 Karim HAGUI (Strasbourg, Fra)
21 Amir HAJ MASSAOUD (CS Sfaxien)
15 Radhi JAIDI (Bolton, Eng)
2 Issam MERDASSI (CS Sfaxien)
6 Hatem TRABELSI (Ajax, Hol)

MIDFIELDERS
7 Chaouki BEN SAADA (Bastia, Fra)
18 Slim BENACHOUR (Guimaraes, Por)
13 Riadh BOUAZIZI (Erciyesspor, Tur)
14 Adel CHEDLI (Nurnberg, Ger)
10 Kaies GHODHBANE (Samsunspor, Tur)
4 Sofiane MELLITI (Vorskla, Ukr)
12 Jouhar MNARI (Nurnberg, Ger)
8 Hamed NAMOUCHI (Rangers, Sco)

FORWARDS
9 Haikel GMAMDIA (Strasbourg, Fra)
5 Ziad JAZIRI (Troyes, Fra)
17 Issam JEMAA (Lens, Fra)
23 Amine LTIFI (Esperance)
11 Francileudo dos SANTOS (Toulouse, Fra)

COACH: Roger LEMERRE (Fra)

Haj Massaoud replaced Karim SAIDI (Feyenoord, Hol)

ZAMBIA

GOALKEEPERS
16 George KOLOLA (Zanaco)
1 Kennedy MWEENE (Free State Stars, SAf)

DEFENDERS
19 Clive HACHILENSA (Free State Stars, SAf)
13 Misheck LUNGU (Papa, Hun)
4 Joseph MUSONDA (Free State Stars, SAf)
18 Billy MWANZA (Golden Arrows, SAf)
3 Kennedy NKETANI (Zanaco)
6 Mark SINYANGWE (Green Buffaloes)
5 Elijah TANA (Petro Atletico, Ang)

MIDFIELDERS
10 Ian BAKALA (Primeiro Agosto, Ang)
22 James CHAMANGA (Umtata Bush Bucks, SAf)
8 Isaac CHANSA (Orlando Pirates, SAf)
21 Rainford KALABA (Nice, Fra)
11 Chris KATONGO (Jomo Cosmos, SAf)
20 Felix KATONGO (Jomo Cosmos, SAf)
7 Clifford MULENGA (Orgryte, Swe)
23 Lameck NJOVU (Lusaka Dynamos)
14 Mumamba NUMBA (Zanaco)
17 Andrew SINKALA (Koln, Ger)

FORWARDS
15 Linos CHALWE (Esperance, Tun)
9 Collins MBESUMA (Portsmouth, Eng)
12 Harry MILANZI (Primeiro Agosto, Ang)
2 Dube PHIRI (Red Arrows)

COACH: Kalusha BWALYA

ZIMBABWE

GOALKEEPERS
16 Tapuwa KAPINI (Highlanders)
1 Energy MURAMBADORO (CAPS United)
23 Gift MUZADZI (CAPS United)

DEFENDERS
13 Cephas CHIMEDZA (Germinal Beerschot, Blg)
2 Herbert DICK (unattached)
6 Zvenyika MAKONESE (Santos, SAf)
21 James MATOLA (Buymore)
14 George MBWANDO (Jahnregensburg, Ger)
4 Bekithemba NDLOVU (Silver Stars, SAf)
11 Charles YOHANE (Wits University, SAf)

MIDFIELDERS
5 Francis CHANDIDA (Buymore)
22 Lloyd CHITEMBWE (CAPS United)
20 Edelbert DINHA (Orlando Pirates, SAf)
19 Edzai KASINAUYO (Moroka Swallows, SAf)
7 Joel LUPHAHLA (SuperSport United, SAf)
8 Tinashe NENGOMASHA (Kaizer Chiefs, SAf)
3 Esrom NYANDORO (Mamelodi Sundowns, SAf)
15 Ronald SIBANDA (AmaZulu)

FORWARDS
18 Brian BADZA (CAPS United)
10 Shingi KAWONDERA (unattached)
17 Gilbert MUSHANGAZHIKE (Jiangsu Shuntian, Chn)
9 Benjani MWARUWARI (Portsmouth, Eng)
12 Peter NDLOVU (Mamelodi Sundowns, SAf)

COACH: Charles MHLAURI

Dick replaced Dumisani MPOFU (Umtata Bush Bucks, SAf)

INTERNATIONALS

FRIENDLIES

Saturday, January 14

Jan 14 - Cairo
Egypt 1 (Zaki pen 24)
South Africa 2 (Zaki og 13, B McCarthy 45)
HT: 1-2
Egypt: Abdelwahed El-Sayed (El-Hadary) - Fathi (Aboutraika), I Said, El-Saqqa, Gomaa, Abdel Wahab (T El-Sayed), Barakat, Shawki (Moustafa), A Hassan (Abdel Malek), Moteab (Ali), Zaki.
South Africa: Marlin - Gaxa, Issa, Katza, Tau, Mabizela, Vilakazi, Nomvete (Nkosi 78), L Mokoena (S Tshabalala 61), Zuma (Mphela 87), B McCarthy (Van Heerden 84).

Jan 14 - Marrakech
Morocco 1 (Armoumen 90)
Zimbabwe 0
HT: 0-0

Jan 14 - Dakar
Senegal 0
DR Congo 0
Ref: Sowe (Gam)
Senegal: Sylva - Coly, Diatta, Diawara (Diakhate 70), Ndaw (Daf 46; Drame 87), A Faye (Djiba 70), Ba (Kamara 60), P B Diop (Diagne-Faye 46), H Camara, E H Diouf (S Camara 70), Mendy (Barry 46).
DR Congo: Kalemba - H Ilunga, Kinkela, Kabundi, Bokese, Tshiolola, Kamudimba, Mputu (Lelo 62), Matumona, Mbala, Mbayo (Kabamba 49). *Sent off: Kinkela 86min.*

Sunday, January 15

Jan 15 - Rades
Tunisia 2 (Melliti 60, Ghodhbane pen 75)
Ghana 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Salah (Lby)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - H Trabelsi, Ayari, Jaidi, Hagui, Melliti (Benachour 86), Ghodhbane, Mnari (Bouazizi 80), Ben Saada (Namouchi 60), Jaziri (Jemaa 62), Santos (Ltifi 46).
Ghana: S Adjei - S Kuffour, Paintsil, Mensah, Pappoe, Appiah, Kingston, Mohammed (Yakubu 44), Dramani (Edusei 43), Tagoe (Attram 71), Frimpong.

Tuesday, January 17

Jan 17 - Abu Dhabi
Jordan 0
Ivory Coast 2 (Drogba 30, Akale 80)
HT: 0-1
Sent off: Drogba 41min, Zoro 87min (both Ivory Coast)

Jan 17 - Rabat
Morocco 2 (Chamakh 5, Y Hadji 7)
Angola 2 (Akwa 43, Mantorras pen 74)
HT: 2-1
Morocco: El-Jarmouni - Regragui, El-Karkouri, Naybet (Abdessadek 67), El-Kaddouri (Kacemi 63), Chippo, Kharja, Yaacoubi, Y Hadji (Madihi 47), Boussaboun, Chamakh (Armoumen 80).
Angola: Joao Ricardo - Jacinto, Lebo-Lebo, Jamba, Marco Abreu, Mendonca, Figueiredo, Miloy, Gilberto, Akwa, Maurito (Mantorras).

Wednesday, January 18

Jan 18 - Riyadh
Saudi Arabia 1 (Haidar 70)
Sweden 1 (A Svensson 32)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Al-Amri (Sau)
Saudi Arabia: Mabrouk - Al-Montashari, Abushgeer (Al-Anbar 63), Al-Khathran (Al-Muwalid 88), Al-Khariri (Al-Ghannam 17), Al-Harbi, Al-Bahri (A Al-Dosari 69), Al-Thaker, Al-Temyat (Al-Shlhoub 63), Haidar (Al-Mahyani 77), Al-Qahtani.
Sweden: Gustafsson - C Andersson, K Svensson, Lucic, Von Schleebrugge, Ericsson (Aubynn 71), Alexandersson, A Svensson, Hysen (Osmanovski 79), Berglund (Selakovic 71), M Jonson (Djuric 85).

Jan 18 - Dubai
United Arab Emirates 1 (Khalil 22)
South Korea 0
HT: 1-0
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Kim Dong-jin, Kim Sang-sik, Choi Jin-chul, Jang Hak-young (Baek Ji-hoon 46), Lee Ho, Kim Do-heon, Cho Won-hee, Park Chu-young, Lee Dong-gook (Jung Jo-gook 72), Lee Chun-soo (Chung Kyung-ho 46).

Sunday, January 22

Jan 22 - San Diego
United States 0
Canada 0
Att: 6,077. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
United States: Reis - Pearce, Conrad, Pope, Hejduk (Klein 46), Olsen (Zavagnin 46), Donovan, Dempsey, Wolff (Rolfe 73), Ching, Twellman (Johnson 56; Adu 81).
Canada: Sutton - Braz, Reda, Gervais, Jazic, Serioux (Ademolu 84), Hutchinson, Grande (Johnson 70), De Rosario, Bernier, Friend.

Monday, January 23

Jan 23 - Abu Dhabi
Jordan 0
Sweden 0
Att: 1,000. **Ref:** Almulla (UAE)
Jordan: Sabbah - Othman, Abu Alieh, Khamees, Mohdkalil, Abukeshek, Shelbaieh (Ibrahim 64), Jaber (Alshuaibi 81), Suleiman, Aquel, Mahmoud.
Sweden: Alvbage - Concha, Persson (Granqvist 54), Lucic, Von Schleebrugge (C Andersson 46), Ishizaki, Alexandersson, Djuric, Aubynn (A Svensson 58), M Jonson (Berglund 73), Selakovic (Hysen 58).

Wednesday, January 25

Jan 25 - Guayaquil
Ecuador 1 (D Caicedo 67)
Honduras 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Ramos (Ecu)
Ecuador: Mora - Reasco, G Espinoza, Guagua, Ambrossi (L Caicedo 82), M Ayovi, Castillo (Garces 46), Saritama (De Jesus 57), Mendez, Mina (D Caicedo 46), Baldeon (Soledispa 72).
Honduras: Valladares - Garcia, S Caballero (Oliva 77), Figueroa, Guerrero, Thomas, Vallecillo, W Palacios, Guevara, L Ramirez (F Ramirez 46), Velasquez.

Jan 25 - San Francisco, USA
Mexico 2 (Fonseca 37, L Perez 88)
Norway 1 (Arst 10)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 44,729. **Ref:** Vaughn (USA)
Mexico: Corona - Duenas, D Davino (Juan P Rodriguez 80), Huiqui, Rojas (Mendez 75), Naelson (Salazar 63), Pardo, C Blanco, Olvera (Guardado 63), Fonseca, Marquez Lugo (L Perez 46).
Norway: E Johnsen - Storbaek, Hangeland, Borgersen, Bertelsen, Rudi, Vaagen Moen, Valencia (Olsen 62), Hoseth (Hauger 46), Kvisvik, Arst. *Sent off: Borgersen 90min.*

Jan 25 - Singapore
Singapore 1 (Sahdan 89)
Denmark League XI 2 (Bech 58, 67)
HT: 0-0

Friday, January 27

Jan 27 - Riyadh
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Mahyani 42)
Lebanon 2 (Ghaddar 14, Nasserdine 70)
HT: 1-1

Sunday, January 29

Jan 29 - Carson
United States 5 (Twellman 5, 18, 76, Pope 67, Klein 87)
Norway 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 16,366. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
United States: Hartman - Dunivant, Conrad, Pope (Ihemelu 83), Hejduk, Zavagnin (Olsen 79), Noonan (Klein 77), Dempsey (Quaranta 70), Donovan, Wolff (Jaqua 67), Twellman (Ching 83).
Norway: E Johnsen - S Pedersen, Hangeland, Kippe, Hanstveit (Bertelsen 46), Rudi (Hoseth 64), Hauger (Valencia 46), Sokolowski (Kvisvik 46), Vaagen Moen, Ohr (Olsen 46), Arst.

Monday, January 30

Jan 30 - Manama
Bahrain 1 (Aiash 60)
Syria 1 (Shaabo 6)
HT: 0-1
Sent off: Jubaili (Syria) 90min

Wednesday, February 1

Feb 1 - Ayutthaya
Thailand 0
Jordan 0

Friday, February 3

Feb 3 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 2 (Jarragh 8, Al-Mutawa 30)
Singapore 2 (Amri 73, Sahdan 90)
HT: 2-0

Monday, February 6

Feb 6 - Doha, Qatar
Oman 1 (Saleh 90)
Singapore 0
HT: 0-0

Tuesday, February 7

Feb 7 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 2 (Salama 6, M Ali 16)
Jordan 1 (Abdulfattah)
HT: 2-1
Sent off: R Ali (Jordan) 57min

Feb 7 - Damascus
Syria 3
Palestine 0
HT: 1-0

Friday, February 10

Feb 10 - San Francisco
United States 3 (Pope 24, Dempsey 39, Twellman 50)
Japan 2 (Maki 60, Nakazawa 90)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 37,365. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)
United States: Hartman - Dunivant (Pearce 90), Conrad, Pope, Klein (Carroll 79), Noonan (Rolfe 87), Zavagnin, Donovan, Dempsey (Olsen 69), Wolff (Johnson 58), Twellman (Ching 68).
Japan: Kawaguchi - M Tanaka (Hasebe 55), Miyamoto, Nakazawa, Kaji, Fukunishi (Abe 55), Endo (Sato 46), Alex, Ogasawara, Ono (Motoyama 68), Kubo (Maki 46).

LG CUP

In Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Jan 21
Greece 1 (Zagorakis 10)
South Korea 1 (Park Chu-young 24)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Al-Shehri (Sau)
Greece: Nikopolidis - Vintra, Kapsis, Dellas (Anatolakis 53), Zagorakis (Tziolis 46; Alexopoulos 77), Antzas, Lagos (Darlas 46), Kafes, Papadopoulos (Gekas 46), Salpingidis, Mantzios (Limberopoulos 46).
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Kim Dong-jin, Choi Jin-cheul, Kim Jin-kyu, Cho Won-hee (Jang Hak-young 37), Baek Ji-hoon, Lee Ho (Kim Jung-woo 46), Kim Do-heon, Park Chu-young (Chung Kyung-ho 46), Lee Dong-gook (Jung Cho-guk 74), Lee Chun-soo (Cho Jae-jin 46).

Jan 21
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Shlhoub 58)
Finland 1 (Roiha 87)
HT: 0-0
Finland: Sillanpaa - Nyman (Lampi 82), Pasoja, Kuivasto, Kononen, Kangaskorpi (Taulo 82), Uusimaki, Ilola (Okkonen 88), Arkivuo, Litmanen (Makela 73), Roiha (Sauso 90).

Jan 25
Finland 0
South Korea 1 (Park Chu-young 47)
HT: 0-0
Finland: Sillanpaa - Nyman, Kononen, Pasoja, Uusimaki (Kangaskorpi 68), Sauso, Arkivuo, Litmanen (Huusko 83), Makela (Roiha 59), Heikkinen (Ilola 46), Okkonen (Taulo 68).
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Jang Hak-young, Kim Young-chul (Yoo Kyeong-ryoul 46), Kim Sang-sik, Cho Won-hee, Baek Ji-hoon, Kim Nam-il (Choi Jin-chul 84), Kim Jung-woo (Lee Ho 57), Chung Kyung-ho, Cho Jae-jin (Lee Dong-gook 75), Park Chu-young (Lee Chun-soo 75).

Jan 25
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Khathran 89)
Greece 1 (Zagorakis pen 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,900. **Ref:** Mohammoud (Bhn)
Saudi Arabia: Al-Daeyea - Al-Dosari (Al-Shahri 67), Al-Montashari, Al-Konandi, Al-Khathran, Al-Shlhoub, Al-Temyat (Al-Jasam 71), Al-Ghannam, Al-Qahtani, Haidar (Al-Masal 75), Al-Jaber.
Greece: Nikopolidis (Kotsolis 46) - Vintra, Kapsis (Alexopoulos 63), Goumas (Anatolakis 77), Antzas, Lagos, Zagorakis (Kafes 82), Karagounis, Gekas, Salpingidis, Mantzios (Limberopoulos 79). *Sent off: Karagounis 86min.*

LG CUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Greece	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Saudi Arabia	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Finland	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

CARLSBERG CUP

In Hong Kong

Semi-finals

Jan 29
Hong Kong 0
Denmark League XI 3 (Berg 22, Augustinussen 40, Due 51)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 13,000. **Ref:** Iemoto (Jap)
Denmark League XI: Ankergreen - Augustinussen (Lucena 75), Berg (D Sorensen 64), Due, Gravgaard, Jacobsen, Jepsen, Stokholm (Retov 83), Bech (Hojer 75), Silberbauer (Borre 78), Svensson (Nielsen 83).

Jan 29
South Korea 2 (Kim Dong-jin 35, Lee Chun-soo 50)
Croatia 0
HT: 1-0
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Kim Dong-jin, Kim Sang-sik, Choi Jin-chul, Cho Won-hee, Baek Ji-hoon, Lee Ho, Kim Jung-woo (Kim Do-heon 46), Chung Kyung-ho, Lee Dong-gook, Lee Chun-soo (Park Chu-young 68).
Croatia: Didulica - Tokic, Jese (Vukman 70), Neretljak, Bosnjak, J Leko, Balatinac (Petric 46), Benko, Kranjcar, Da Silva, Vugrinec (Safaric 70).

Third-place play-off

Feb 1
Hong Kong 0
Croatia 4 (Knezevik 16, Poon Yiu-cheuk og 30, Da Silva 64, Bosnjak 72)
HT: 0-2
Croatia: Didulica (Turina 46) - Vukman (Vugrinec 46), Knezevic, Tokic, Neretljak (Bartulovic 46; Safaric 77), Linic, Bosnjak, J Leko, Benko (Posavec 69), Kranjcar, Da Silva (Jese 83).

Final

Feb 1
South Korea 1 (Cho Jae-jin 13)
Denmark League XI 3 (Jacobsen 43, Bech 65, Silberbauer 88)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Fong (HK)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Kim Dong-jin, Yoo Kyeong-ryoul, Choi Jin-chul, Cho Won-hee, Kim Nam-il, Kim Do-heon, Baek Ji-hoon, Chung Kyung-ho, Park Chu-young, Cho Jae-jin.
Denmark League XI: Christiansen - Augustinussen (Retov 75), Due (Berg 50), Gravgaard, Jacobsen, Jepsen (C Sorensen 62), Stokholm, Bech (Hojer 90), Silberbauer, D Sorensen (Bak 85), Svensson.

2007 ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

Match schedule

Group A

India
Japan
Saudi Arabia
Yemen

22.02.06	Japan-India
22.02.06	Yemen-Saudi Arabia
01.03.06	India-Yemen
01.03.06	Saudi Arabia-Japan
16.08.06	India-Saudi Arabia
16.08.06	Japan-Yemen
06.09.06	Saudi Arabia-India
06.09.06	Yemen-Japan
11.10.06	India-Japan
11.10.06	Saudi Arabia-Yemen
15.11.06	Japan-Saudi Arabia
15.11.06	Yemen-India

Group B

Iran
South Korea
Syria
Taiwan

22.02.06	Iran-Taiwan
22.02.06	Syria-South Korea
01.03.06	South Korea-Iran
01.03.06	Taiwan-Syria
16.08.06	Iran-Syria
16.08.06	Taiwan-South Korea
06.09.06	South Korea-Taiwan
06.09.06	Syria-Iran
11.10.06	South Korea-Syria
11.10.06	Taiwan-Iran
15.11.06	Iran-South Korea
15.11.06	Syria-Taiwan

Group C
Jordan
Oman
Pakistan
United Arab Emirates

22.02.06 Jordan-Pakistan
22.02.06 UAE-Oman
01.03.06 Oman-Jordan
01.03.06 Pakistan-UAE
16.08.06 Jordan-UAE
16.08.06 Pakistan-Oman
06.09.06 Oman-Pakistan
06.09.06 UAE-Jordan
11.10.06 Oman-UAE
11.10.06 Pakistan-Jordan
15.11.06 Jordan-Oman
15.11.06 UAE-Pakistan

Group D
Australia
Bahrain
Kuwait
Lebanon

22.02.06 Bahrain-Australia
22.02.06 Lebanon-Kuwait
01.03.06 Kuwait-Bahrain
16.08.06 Australia-Kuwait
16.08.06 Bahrain-Lebanon
01.09.06 Australia-Lebanon
06.09.06 Kuwait-Australia
06.09.06 Lebanon-Bahrain
11.10.06 Australia-Bahrain
11.10.06 Kuwait-Lebanon
15.11.06 Bahrain-Kuwait
15.11.06 Lebanon-Australia

Group E
China
Iraq
Palestine
Singapore

22.02.06 China-Palestine
22.02.06 Singapore-Iraq
01.03.06 Iraq-China
01.03.06 Palestine-Singapore
16.08.06 China-Singapore
16.08.06 Palestine-Iraq
06.09.06 Iraq-Palestine
06.09.06 Singapore-China
11.10.06 Iraq-Singapore
11.10.06 Palestine-China
15.11.06 China-Iraq
15.11.06 Singapore-Palestine

Group F
Bangladesh
Hong Kong
Qatar
Uzbekistan

22.02.06 Hong Kong-Qatar
22.02.06 Uzbekistan-Bangladesh
01.03.06 Bangladesh-Hong Kong
01.03.06 Qatar-Uzbekistan
16.08.06 Bangladesh-Qatar
16.08.06 Uzbekistan-Hong Kong
06.09.06 Hong Kong-Uzbekistan
06.09.06 Qatar-Bangladesh
11.10.06 Bangladesh-Uzbekistan
11.10.06 Qatar-Hong Kong
15.11.06 Hong Kong-Bangladesh
15.11.06 Uzbekistan-Qatar

Top two from each group qualify for finals. Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam qualify automatically as co-hosts

EURO 2008 QUALIFIERS

Draw

Group A
Portugal
Poland
Serbia & Montenegro
Belgium
Finland
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Kazakhstan

Group B
France
Italy
Ukraine
Scotland
Lithuania
Georgia
Faroe Islands

Group C
Greece
Turkey
Norway
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Hungary
Moldova
Malta

Group D
Czech Republic
Germany
Slovakia
Republic of Ireland
Wales
Cyprus
San Marino

Group E
England
Croatia
Russia
Israel
Estonia
Macedonia
Andorra

Group F
Sweden
Spain
Denmark
Latvia
Iceland
Northern Ireland
Liechtenstein

Group G
Holland
Romania
Bulgaria
Slovenia
Albania
Belarus
Luxembourg

Top two from each group qualify for finals. Austria and Switzerland qualify automatically as co-hosts

CLUB FOOTBALL EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

1st knockout round draw

Ajax (Hol) v Internazionale (Ita)***
Bayern Munich (Ger) v Milan (Ita)*
Benfica (Por) v Liverpool (Eng)*
Chelsea (Eng) v Barcelona (Spa)**
PSV Eindhoven (Hol) v Lyon (Fra)*
Rangers (Sco) v Villarreal (Spa)**
Real Madrid (Spa) v Arsenal (Eng)*
Werder Bremen (Ger) v Juventus (Ita)**

**1st leg – February 21; 2nd leg – March 8*
***1st leg – February 22; 2nd leg – March 7*
****1st leg – February 22; 2nd leg – March 14*

UEFA CUP

1st knockout round draw

Artmedia Bratislava (Slk) v Levski Sofia (Bul)
Basle (Swi) v Monaco (Fra)
Betis (Spa) v AZ Alkmaar (Hol)
Bolton (Eng) v Marseille (Fra)
Club Brugge (Blg) v Roma (Ita)
Heerenveen (Hol) v Steaua Bucharest (Rom)
Hertha Berlin (Ger) v Rapid Bucharest (Rom)
Lille (Fra) v Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)
Litex Lovech (Bul) v Strasbourg (Fra)
Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) v Sevilla (Spa)
Rosenborg (Nor) v Zenit St Petersburg (Rus)
Schalke (Ger) v Espanyol (Spa)
Slavia Prague (Cze) v Palermo (Ita)*
Stuttgart (Ger) v Middlesbrough (Eng)*
Thun (Swi) v Hamburg (Ger)*
Udinese (Ita) v Lens (Fra)

*1st legs – February 15 (*1st legs – February 16); 2nd legs – February 23*

ROYAL LEAGUE

Group A
Feb 9: Midtjylland (Den) 4 Hammarby (Swe) 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Midtjylland	4	2	2	0	11	4	8
Hammarby	4	1	2	1	7	8	5
Valerenga (Nor)	4	1	2	1	6	8	5
Start (Nor)	4	0	2	2	7	11	2

Group B
Feb 9: Brondby (Den) 1 FC Copenhagen (Den) 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lillestrom (Nor)	4	2	2	0	3	0	8
FC Copenhagen	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Kalmar (Swe)	4	1	2	1	2	3	5
Brondby	4	0	2	2	3	5	2

Group C
Feb 9: AaB (Den) 2 Lyn (Nor) 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
D'gardens (Swe)	4	3	0	1	7	4	9
Lyn	4	2	0	2	6	5	6
AaB	4	1	1	2	7	9	4
Goth'burg (Swe)	4	1	1	2	5	7	4

Top two from each group qualify for second stage

AUSTRIA

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	21	12	4	5	28	17	40
Salzburg	22	13	1	8	33	24	40
Rapid Wien	22	9	7	6	36	26	34
Grazer AK	21	10	4	7	32	23	34
Pasching	22	9	6	7	27	20	33
SV Ried	22	8	9	5	33	28	33
Wacker Tirol	22	6	9	7	26	30	27
Sturm Graz	22	6	7	9	27	34	25
Mattersburg	22	6	4	12	24	38	22
Admira	22	3	3	16	24	50	12

BELGIUM

Friday, January 20
Club Brugge 3 (Portillo 23, 85, Roelandts 66)
FC Brussels 0 Att: 24,000

Saturday, January 21
Anderlecht 2 (Vanden Borre 72, Frutos 84)
Cercle Brugge 2 (Meyssen 56, Dekelver 77) Att: 22,575

Beveren 1 (Gervinho 9)
Roeselare 1 (Eloi 3) Att: 3,000

Gent 3 (Zoko 5, Boussoufa 13, Lombaerts 23)
La Louviere 0 Att: 6,492

Lokeren 1 (Bance 81)
Mouscron 1 (Sanchez D'Avolio 18) Att: 4,500

St Truiden 1 (Mbonabucya 24)
Lierse 1 (Nunes 86) Att: 8,500

Standard 1 (Niculae 74)
Zulte-Waregem 2 (D'Haemers 50, Sergeant 75) Att: 24,000

Westerlo 1 (C Janssens 78)
Germinal Beerschot 3 (De Roeck 69, Dosunmu 72, 85) Att: 6,000

Sunday, January 22
Charleroi 2 (Akgul 4, Serebrennikov 43)
Genk 1 (Vandenbergh 66) Att: 10,500

Saturday, January 28
FC Brussels 1 (Snelders 37)
Lokeren 1 (Overmeire 52) Att: 3,000

Cercle Brugge 1 (Dekelver 88)
Gent 2 (Vrancken 36, Zoko 75) Att: 4,900

Genk 2 (Peeters 7, Pocognoli 38)
Westerlo 0 Att: 22,279

Germinal Beerschot 2 (Cavens 27, 85)
Anderlecht 0 Att: 11,000

La Louviere 2 (Mazurkiewicz 45, Oliseh 60)
Zulte-Waregem 2 (Sergeant 32, Meert 50) Att: 2,888

Lierse 2 (Yakovenko 24, Mujanovic 79)
Beveren 0 Att: 6,500

Mouscron 0
Charleroi 1 (Orlando 10) Att: 3,500

St Truiden 0
Standard 0 Att: 10,000

Sunday, January 29
Roeselare 1 (Eloi 15)
Club Brugge 1 (Ishiaku 70) Att: 9,000

Friday, February 3
Club Brugge 3 (Leko 21, Clement 87, 89)
Lierse 1 (Clement og 90) Att: 24,511

Saturday, February 4
Anderlecht 4 (Goor 9, pen 12, 65, Frutos 63)
Genk 1 (Vandenbergh 31) Att: 24,521

Beveren 1 (Gervinho 5)
St Truiden 1 (De Conde 39) Att: 3,000

Charleroi 1 (Ciman 80)
FC Brussels 0 Att: 10,984

Gent 2 (Gregoire 28, Martens 43)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Lolo 45) Att: 7,922

Lokeren 2 (Bance 61, Bouchouari 65)
Roeselare 2 (Lahousse 26, Vandamme 35) Att: 4,500

Westerlo 0
Mouscron 5 (Filekovic 3, Siljak 48, pen 63, Custovic 55, 89) Att: 4,500

Zulte-Waregem 3 (Sergeant 55, Salou 71, 89)
Cercle Brugge 1 (Dekelver 59) Att: 5,000

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	21	12	6	3	35	19	42
Anderlecht	21	11	7	3	46	22	40
Standard	20	12	3	5	31	19	39
Zulte-Waregem	21	11	4	6	41	32	37
Genk	21	9	7	5	35	27	34
Gent	21	10	4	7	29	25	34
Westerlo	21	9	5	7	28	24	32
Lokeren	21	8	8	5	31	29	32
Charleroi	21	8	6	7	22	25	30
FC Brussels	21	7	8	6	24	22	29
Roeselare	21	6	8	7	33	27	26
Germinal B	21	7	3	11	28	36	24
Mouscron	21	7	2	12	31	34	23
Cercle Brugge	21	6	4	11	27	36	22
Beveren	21	6	3	12	25	34	21
La Louviere	20	4	7	9	19	37	19
St Truiden	21	4	6	11	20	31	18
Lierse	21	2	7	12	11	37	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Tosin Dosunmu (Germinal Beerschot)
12 Mohammed Tchite (Standard)

BELGIAN CUP – quarter-finals

1st legs
Jan 25: Gent 2 Standard 1; Mouscron 0 Beveren 0; St Truiden 0 Charleroi 0; Zulte-Waregem 3 Westerlo 0.

2nd legs
Feb 8: Beveren 0 Mouscron 2 *Mouscron 2-0 on agg*; Charleroi 2 St Truiden 0 *Charleroi 2-0 on agg*; Westerlo 3 Zulte-Waregem 1 (aet) *Zulte-Waregem 4-3 on agg.*

Still to play: Standard v Gent.

BULGARIA

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	14	13	1	0	53	10	40
Levski	14	10	3	1	38	15	33
Lok Sofia	14	10	0	4	26	12	30
Lovech	14	9	2	3	25	10	29
Lok Plovdiv	14	7	3	4	26	21	24
Vihren	14	7	1	6	21	26	22
Cherno More	14	5	2	7	15	18	17
Slavia	14	5	2	7	12	17	17
Beroe	14	4	4	6	19	25	16
Belasitsa	14	4	2	8	15	24	14
Botev	14	2	6	6	11	23	12
Rodopa	14	3	3	8	12	28	12
Pirin 1922	14	2	5	7	10	21	11
Marek	14	2	3	9	9	24	9
Naftex	14	2	3	9	8	26	9

CROATIA

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	17	14	2	1	47	7	44
Rijeka	18	11	3	4	34	23	36
Kamen Ingrad	18	8	4	6	23	20	28
Varteks	18	9	1	8	30	29	28
Osijek	18	8	3	7	21	28	27
Zagreb	18	7	3	8	16	21	24
Cibalia	18	7	2	9	19	28	23
Hajduk	17	5	7	5	23	16	22
Medimurje	18	5	5	8	21	29	20
Pula	18	5	4	9	21	24	19
Slaven	18	3	6	9	20	31	15
Inter	18	3	4	11	11	30	13

CZECH REPUBLIC

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liberec	16	10	5	1	26	11	35
Teplice	16	8	6	2	20	11	30
Slavia	16	7	6	3	29	19	27
Pribram	16	6	6	4	23	17	24
Jablonec	16	7	3	6	24	19	24
Mlada Boleslav	15	7	3	5	24	23	24
Olomouc	16	7	2	7	22	25	23
Zlin	16	6	4	6	16	16	22
Sparta	16	6	2	8	26	27	20
Plzen	16	5	5	6	17	18	20
Ostrava	16	5	5	6	15	17	20
Jihlava	15	4	5	6	12	20	17
Slovacko	16	3	7	6	15	19	16
Brno	16	3	6	7	17	21	15
Chmel BIsany	16	3	6	7	14	27	15
Most	16	4	1	11	14	24	13

DENMARK

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Copenhagen	20	15	4	1	40	13	49
Brondby	20	14	3	3	40	17	45
Viborg	20	11	4	5	38	24	37
OB	20	9	5	6	30	22	32
AaB	20	7	6	7	28	25	27
Nordsjaelland	20	6	7	7	29	27	25
Esbjerg	20	6	5	9	26	30	23
Midtjylland	20	5	6	9	27	39	21
Silkeborg	20	5	5	10	17	32	20
Horsens	20	3	10	7	14	26	19
AGF	20	3	7	10	27	41	16
SonderjyskE	20	3	4	13	26	46	13

ENGLAND

Saturday, January 14
Arsenal 7 (Henry 20, 29, 68, Senderos 23, Pires 45, Gilberto Silva 59, Hleb 84)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 38,186

Aston Villa 1 (Hendrie 27)
West Ham 2 (Zamora 51, Harewood pen 60) Att: 36,700

Blackburn 0
Bolton 0 Att: 18,180

Charlton 2 (Hughes 29, D Bent 90)
Birmingham 0 Att: 26,312

Fulham 1 (Malbranque 75)
Newcastle 0 Att: 21,974

Liverpool 1 (Kewell 59)
Tottenham 0 Att: 44,983

Manchester City 3 (Sinclair 32, Vassell 39, Fowler 90)
Manchester Utd 1 (Van Nistelrooy 76) Att: 47,192

Portsmouth 0
Everton 1 (Osman 31) Att: 20,094

Sunday, January 15
Sunderland 1 (Lawrence 12)
Chelsea 2 (Crespo 28, Robben 69) Att: 32,420

Wigan 0
West Bromwich 1 (Albrechtsen 56) Att: 17,421

Saturday, January 21
Birmingham 5 (Jarosik 5, Pennant 37, Upson 55, Dunn 90, Forssell pen 90)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 29,138

Bolton 2 (Borgetti 37, Nolan 41)
Manchester City 0 Att: 26,466

Everton 1 (Beattie 14)
Arsenal 0 Att: 36,920

Middlesbrough 2 (Hasselbaink 56, Aiyegbeni 66)
Wigan 3 (Roberts 3, Thompson 29, Mellor 90) Att: 27,208

Newcastle 0
Blackburn 1 (Gamst Pedersen 75) Att: 51,323

Tottenham 0
Aston Villa 0 Att: 36,243

West Bromwich 0
Sunderland 1 (Le Tallec 72) Att: 26,464

Sunday, January 22
Chelsea 1 (Gudjohnsen 19)
Charlton 1 (M Bent 59) Att: 41,355

Manchester Utd 1 (Ferdinand 90)
Liverpool 0 Att: 67,874

Monday, January 23
West Ham 2 (Ferdinand 17, Benayoun 28)
Fulham 1 (Helguson 52) Att: 29,812

Tuesday, January 31
Charlton 0
West Bromwich 0 Att: 25,921

Fulham 1 (Bocanegra 90)
Tottenham 0 Att: 21,081

Sunderland 0
Middlesbrough 3 (Pogatetz 19, Parnaby 31, Hasselbaink 71) Att: 31,675

Wigan 1 (Scharner 45)
Everton 1 (Thompson og 9) Att: 21,731

Wednesday, February 1
Arsenal 2 (Henry 45, Pires 90)
West Ham 3 (Reo-Coker 25, Zamora 32, Etherington 80) Att: 38,562

Aston Villa 1 (Moore 78)
Chelsea 1 (Robben 14) Att: 38,562

Blackburn 4 (Bentley 35, 41, 56, Neill pen 45)
Manchester Utd 3 (Saha 38, Van Nistelrooy 64, 68) Att: 25,484

Liverpool 1 (Gerrard 62)
Birmingham 1 (Xabi Alonso og 88) Att: 43,851

Manchester City 3 (Riera 14, Cole 38, Vassell 62)
Newcastle 0 Att: 42,413

Portsmouth 1 (Karadas 85)
Bolton 1 (Fadiga 69) Att: 19,128

Saturday, February 4
Birmingham 0
Arsenal 2 (Adebayor 21, Henry 63) Att: 27,075

Bolton 1 (Giannakopoulos 63)
Wigan 1 (Johansson 77) Att: 25,854

Everton 1 (Weir 8)
Manchester City 0 Att: 37,827

Manchester Utd 4 (Park 6, Cristiano Ronaldo 14, 87, Saha 23)
Fulham 2 (McBride 22, Helguson 37) Att: 67,844

Middlesbrough 0
Aston Villa 4 (Moore 18, 62, 64, Phillips 24) Att: 27,299

Newcastle 2 (N'Zogbia 41, Shearer 64)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 51,627

West Bromwich 2 (Campbell 7, Greening 32)
Blackburn 0 Att: 23,993

West Ham 2 (Ashton 81, Konchesky 87)
Sunderland 0 Att: 34,745

Sunday, February 5
Chelsea 2 (Gallas 35, Crespo 68)
Liverpool 0 Att: 42,316

Tottenham 3 (Defoe 14, 46, Jenas 41)
Charlton 1 (Thomas 70) Att: 36,034

Wednesday, February 8
Charlton 2 (D Bent pen 42, Young 45)
Liverpool 0 Att: 27,111

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	25	21	3	1	52	13	66
Man Utd	25	15	6	4	49	26	51
Liverpool	24	13	6	5	30	17	45
Tottenham	25	12	8	5	34	21	44
Arsenal	24	12	4	8	38	19	40
Wigan	25	12	3	10	30	31	39
Bolton	23	10	8	5	29	22	38
West Ham	25	11	5	9	36	34	38
Blackburn	24	11	4	9	31	30	37
Man City	25	10	4	11	33	28	34
Charlton	24	10	3	11	30	34	33
Everton	25	10	3	12	18	32	33
Aston Villa	25	7	9	9	31	33	30
Fulham	25	8	5	12	30	36	29
Newcastle	24	8	5	11	22	28	29
West Brom	25	7	5	13	23	32	26
Middlesbrough	24	6	7	11	30	44	25
Birmingham	24	5	5	14	21	34	20
Portsmouth	25	4	6	15	17	42	18
Sunderland	24	2	3	19	17	45	9

LEADING GOALSCORERS
18 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)
15 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
13 Frank Lampard (Chelsea)
12 Yakubu Aiyegbeni (Middlesbrough)
12 Darren Bent (Charlton)

FA CUP – 3rd round (last 64)

Replays
Jan 17: Birmingham 2 Torquay 0; Chester 0 Cheltenham 1; Leeds 3 Wigan 3 (aet; Wigan 4-2 on pens); Middlesbrough 5 Nuneaton 2; Reading 3 West Bromwich 2; Tamworth 1 Stoke 1 (aet; Stoke 5-4 on pens); Walsall 2 Barnsley 0.
Jan 18: Everton 1 Millwall 0; Manchester Utd 5 Burton 0.

4th round (last 32)

Jan 28: Aston Villa 3 Port Vale 1; Bolton 1 Arsenal 0; Brentford 2 Sunderland 1; Charlton 2 Leyton Orient 1; Cheltenham 0 Newcastle 2; Colchester 3 Derby 1; Coventry 1 Middlesbrough 1; Everton 1 Chelsea 1; Leicester 0 Southampton 1; Manchester City 1 Wigan 0; Preston 1 Crystal Palace 1; Reading 1 Birmingham 1; Stoke 2 Walsall 1; West Ham 4 Blackburn 2.
Jan 29: Portsmouth 1 Liverpool 2; Wolverhampton 0 Manchester Utd 3.

Replays
Feb 7: Birmingham 2 Reading 1; Crystal Palace 1 Preston 2.
Feb 8: Chelsea 4 Everton 1; Middlesbrough 1 Coventry 0.

FRANCE

Saturday, January 14
Auxerre 1 (Luyindula 45)
Lens 0 Att: 12,000

Le Mans 1 (Antonio Carlos og 90)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 8,611

Lille 3 (Moussilou 1, Pitau og 45, Gygax 55)
Sochaux 0 Att: 12,286

Monaco 0
Bordeaux 1 (Denilson 70) Att: 11,476

Nancy 0
Lyon 2 (Cacapa 75, Fred 84) Att: 19,126

Nantes 0
Nice 0 Att: 24,752

Strasbourg 2 (Le Pen pen 11, Johansen 36)
Metz 1 (Tum 87) Att: 15,543

Sunday, January 15
Marseille 1 (Pagis 65)
Rennes 0 Att: 40,000

Paris SG 2 (Pauleta pen 45, Pancrate 90)
Troyes 1 (Ba 50) Att: 35,118

Saturday, January 21
Ajaccio 3 (Waldir Lucas Pereira 12, 55, N'Diaye 88)
Marseille 1 (Pagis 45) Att: 4,565

Bordeaux 2 (Menegazzo 37, Faubert 90)
Strasbourg 1 (Le Pen pen 10) Att: 18,208

Metz 1 (Proment 27)
Nantes 4 (Guillon 23, Diallo 42, 65, Payet 90) Att: 12,369

Nice 1 (Traore 88)
Paris SG 0 Att: 11,941

Rennes 0
Nancy 2 (Brison 58, Duchemin 90) Att: 24,142

Sochaux 4 (Menez pen 45, Ilan 52, Dagano pen 60, 90)
Saint-Etienne 0 Att: 13,566

Toulouse 0
Lille 0 Att: 15,416

Troyes 1 (Nivet 60)
Le Mans 3 (Matsui 31, 35, Faure 79) Att: 9,979

Sunday, January 22
Lens 1 (Gillet 45)
Monaco 1 (Gakpe 6) Att: 35,796

Lyon 1 (Diarra 43)
Auxerre 1 (Luyindula 89) Att: 37,958

Saturday, January 28
Auxerre 2 (Pieroni pen 68, Kahlenberg 80)
Rennes 0 Att: 6,606

Bordeaux 1 (Laslandes pen 28)
Lens 0 Att: 21,575

Le Mans 1 (De Melo 22)
Toulouse 1 (Apka Akpro 11) Att: 8,496

Marseille 0
Sochaux 0 Att: 46,090

Nancy 0
Ajaccio 0 Att: 15,640

Sunday, January 29
Lille 3 (Keita 3, Morisot og 53, Tavlaridis 64)
Metz 1 (Borbiconi 90) Att: 12,104

Wednesday, February 1
Saint-Etienne 1 (Diawara 82)
Toulouse 3 (Apka Akpro 6, 71, Arribage 67) Att: 24,296

Saturday, February 4
Ajaccio 1 (N'Diaye 82)
Auxerre 0 Att: 3,203

Lens 2 (Cousin 78, Khiter 83)
Strasbourg 1 (Gameiro 51) Att: 30,922

Nice 2 (Vahirua 19, Roudet 39)
Lille 0 Att: 9,701

Paris SG 2 (Pauleta 31, Pancrate 82)
Saint-Etienne 2 (Piquionne 16, Alonzo og 34) Att: 43,026

Rennes 1 (Mvuemba 25)
Monaco 3 (Vieri 55, 67, Veigneau 90) Att: 25,955

Sochaux 0
Le Mans 0 Att: 9,884

Toulouse 1 (Arribage 56)
Nantes 0 Att: 15,204

Sunday, February 5
Lyon 0
Bordeaux 0 Att: 39,354

Troyes 0
Marseille 1 (Lamouchi 7) Att: 18,860

Wednesday, February 8
Strasbourg 1 (Diane 13)
Paris SG 1 (Pauleta 31) Att: 17,803

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	24	16	7	1	39	15	55
Bordeaux	25	12	10	3	22	12	46
Auxerre	25	13	3	9	32	25	42
Lille	25	11	7	7	34	19	40
Paris SG	25	11	6	8	31	25	39
Marseille	25	11	6	8	26	27	39
Lens	25	8	13	4	32	21	37
Monaco	24	10	6	8	25	19	36
Le Mans	25	10	6	9	24	19	36
Saint-Etienne	24	8	10	6	23	22	34
Nice	24	8	9	7	19	19	33
Toulouse	25	9	6	10	25	28	33
Nancy	24	9	5	10	24	19	32
Rennes	25	10	2	13	25	38	32
Nantes	24	8	6	10	24	24	30
Sochaux	25	6	9	10	18	25	27
Troyes	24	6	7	11	21	30	25
Ajaccio	25	4	8	13	14	29	20
Strasbourg	25	2	10	13	16	33	16
Metz	24	2	8	14	14	39	14

LEADING GOALSCORERS
15 Pauleta (Paris SG)
9 Peguy Luyindula (Auxerre)
8 Daniel Cousin (Lens)
8 Luigi Pieroni (Auxerre)
8 Sylvain Wiltord (Lyon)

FRENCH CUP – last 32

Jan 27: Brest 2 Amiens 0.
Jan 28: Bastia 2 Agde 0 (aet); Dijon 1 Moulins 0.
Jan 31: Bois-Guillaume 0 Nantes 2; Bordeaux 2 Entente SSG 1; Lyon-la-Duchere 0 Strasbourg 0 (aet; Lyon-la-Duchere 5-4 on pens); Rennes 1 Lens 0.
Feb 1: Ajaccio 1 Lyon 2 (aet); Colmar 1 Monaco 0 (aet); Lorient 0 Lille 1; Marseille 2 Metz 0; Paris SG 1 Auxerre 0.

Still to play: AS Vitre v Longuenesse; Chateauroux v Sochaux; Montpellier v Roye; Saint-Genevieve v Calais.*

**Longuenesse lost their tie against Caen in the previous round but progressed after Caen were excluded for breaching regulations*

GERMANY

Friday, January 27
Monchengladbach 1 (Sonck 56)
Bayern Munich 3 (Makaay 13, 69, Ballack 55) Att: 54,019

Saturday, January 28
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Freier 67, Butt pen 74)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Amanatidis 41) Att: 22,500

Borussia Dortmund 3 (Schnoor og 23, Smolarek 31, Gambino 69)
Wolfsburg 2 (Hanke 13, Klimowicz 72) Att: 62,500

Hertha 1 (Van Burik 90)
Hannover 1 (Dabrowski 13) Att: 33,740

Mainz 4 (Thurk 5, 54, Zidan 61, Auer 87)
Koln 2 (Podolski pen 32, Scherz 49) Att: 20,300

Nurnberg 2 (Saenko 67, Kiessling 72)
Hamburg 1 (Wolf og 64) Att: 23,928

Stuttgart 0
Duisburg 1 (Caligiuri 43) Att: 31,000

Sunday, January 29
Arminia Bielefeld 0
Werder Bremen 1 (Fahrenhorst 72) Att: 24,196

Kaiserslautern 0
Schalke 2 (Lincoln 12, Kobiashvili pen 78) Att: 35,549

Saturday, February 4
Bayern Munich 1 (Ballack 36)
Bayer Leverkusen 0 Att: 69,000

Duisburg 2 (Kurth 41, Tararache pen 62)
Kaiserslautern 2 (Halfar 79, 83) Att: 20,812

Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Jones 58)
Hertha 1 (Boateng 20) Att: 30,000

Hamburg 2 (Takahara 51, Barbarez 73)
Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Boakye 26) Att: 50,991

Koln 0
Stuttgart 0 Att: 47,500

Schalke 0
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 61,524

Werder Bremen 4 (Haedo Valdez 39, 69, Klasnic 45, Micoud 45)
Mainz 2 (Zidan 1, N Weiland 12) Att: 37,717

Sunday, February 5
Hannover 1 (Stajner 74)
Nurnberg 1 (Vittek 56) Att: 31,102

Wolfsburg 2 (Klimowicz 41, Hanke 64)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 17,936

Tuesday, February 7
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Brzenska 66, Rosicky pen 88)
Duisburg 0 Att: 62,200

Hertha 0
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 72,940

Kaiserslautern 2 (Sanogo pen 42, Schonheim 76)
Koln 2 (Streller 37, 75) Att: 29,145

Mainz 1 (Zidan pen 50)
Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Boakye 57) Att: 19,500

Wednesday, February 8
Bayer Leverkusen 4 (Berbatov 44, Barnetta 55, Schneider 71, Madouni 75)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 20,000
Hannover 2 (Zuraw 48, Hashemian 72)
Hamburg 1 (Barbarez 81) Att: 40,053

Monchengladbach 0
Schalke 0 Att: 51,026

Nurnberg 0
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Amanatidis 43) Att: 22,621

Stuttgart 0
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 30,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	20	16	3	1	39	13	51
Werder Bremen	20	13	4	3	51	23	43
Hamburg	20	12	5	3	32	14	41
Schalke	20	9	9	2	22	12	36
Hertha	20	7	8	5	29	26	29
B Dortmund	20	7	7	6	28	26	28
Stuttgart	20	5	12	3	21	18	27
Hannover	20	5	11	4	30	26	26
M'gladbach	20	6	8	6	25	26	26
B Leverkusen	20	6	7	7	30	28	25
Eintracht F'furt	20	7	4	9	27	30	25
A Bielefeld	20	5	6	9	23	29	21
Wolfsburg	20	5	6	9	21	36	21
Mainz	20	5	5	10	31	33	20
Nurnberg	20	4	6	10	21	33	18
Duisburg	20	3	7	10	18	35	16
Koln	20	3	5	12	28	45	14
Kaiserslautern	20	3	5	12	27	50	14

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Miroslav Klose (Werder Bremen)
13 Halil Altintop (Kaiserslautern)
12 Ebi Smolarek (Borussia Dortmund)
11 Diego Klimowicz (Wolfsburg)
10 Roy Makaay (Bayern Munich)

GERMAN CUP – quarter-finals

Jan 24: Bayern Munich 3 Mainz 2 (aet).
Jan 25: Arminia Bielefeld 1 Kickers Offenbach 1 (aet; Arminia Bielefeld 4-2 on pens); 1860 Munich 1 Eintracht Frankfurt 3; St Pauli 3 Werder Bremen 1.

GREECE

Jan 14: Iraklis 1 Akratitos 0; AEK 2 Atromitos 1.
Jan 15: PAOK 1 Xanthi 0; Olympiakos 3 Panathinaikos 2; OFI 1 Apollon 2; Ionikos 2 Levadiakos 0.
Jan 16: Larisa 1 Panionios 0.
Jan 22: Aigaleo 1 Kallithea 0.
Jan 28: Kallithea 2 Larisa 1; Akratitos 0 Aigaleo 3.
Jan 29: Xanthi 0 OFI 0; Panathinaikos 1 Ionikos 0; Iraklis 4 AEK 0; Atromitos 2 PAOK 1.
Jan 30: Panionios 2 Olympiakos 3.
Feb 1: Levadiakos 1 Apollon 0.
Feb 4: Panathinaikos 2 Levadiakos 0; Aigaleo 0 AEK 2.
Feb 5: PAOK 1 Iraklis 0; OFI 0 Atromitos 0; Larisa 2 Akratitos 1; Ionikos 0 Panionios 1; Apollon 2 Xanthi 1.
Feb 6: Olympiakos 2 Kallithea 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	18	16	0	2	40	12	48
AEK	18	13	3	2	25	12	42
Panathinaikos	18	11	3	4	29	15	36
PAOK	18	8	6	4	28	17	30
Iraklis	18	8	4	6	21	18	28
Xanthi	18	7	5	6	20	17	26
Atromitos	18	7	4	7	20	19	25
Aigaleo	18	6	7	5	16	19	25
Larisa	18	6	5	7	20	23	23
Ionikos	18	5	7	6	22	22	22
Apollon	18	6	4	8	18	24	22
Levadiakos	18	4	5	9	11	19	17
Panionios	18	4	3	11	14	28	15
OFI	18	2	8	8	10	21	14
Kallithea	18	2	6	10	14	26	12
Akratitos	18	2	4	12	9	25	10

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS AT 05.02.06

POS		TEAM	GOALS	FACTOR	PTS
1	Luca Toni	Fiorentina (Ita)	22	2	44
2	Tarmo Neemelo	TVMK (Est)	41	1	41
3	Samuel Eto'o	Barcelona (Spa)	18	2	36
	David Trezeguet	Juventus (Ita)	18	2	36
	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	Manchester United (Eng)	18	2	36
6	Miroslav Klose	Werder Bremen (Ger)	16	2	32
7	Thierry Henry	Arsenal (Eng)	15	2	30
	Pauleta	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)	15	2	30
9	Kris Boyd	Kilmarnock/Rangers (Sco)	19	1.5	28.5
10	David Villa	Valencia (Spa)	14	2	28
11	Klaas Jan Huntelaar	Heerenveen/Ajax (Hol)	18	1.5	27
	Mantas Savenas	Ekranas (Lit)	27	1	27
13	Halil Altintop	Kaiserslautern (Ger)	13	2	26
	Maksim Gruznov	Trans Narva (Est)	26	1	26
	Frank Lampard	Chelsea (Eng)	13	2	26
	Francesco Totti	Roma (Ita)	13	2	26
17	Shota Arveladze	AZ Alkmaar (Hol)	17	1.5	25.5
18	Tomas Radzinevicius	Suduva (Lit)	25	1	25

For the latest standings, updated weekly, visit www.worldsoccer.com

HOLLAND

Friday, January 13
Groningen 2 (Nevland 24, Buijs 53)
Heerenveen 0 Att: 20,000

Saturday, January 14
Heracles 0
AZ 2 (Landzaat 6, Perez 73) Att: 8,500

NAC 0
Roda JC 4 (Vicelich 7, Van Dijk 61, Oper 76, Cisse 90) Att: 13,498

RKC 1 (De Ceulaer 4)
RBC 1 (Daelemans 76) Att: 5,800

Sunday, January 15
Ajax 1 (Rosenberg 12)
NEC 1 (Wielaert 6) Att: 48,000

Den Haag 2 (Mols 59, Den Ouden pen 90)
Utrecht 3 (Van den Bergh 22, Nelisse 28, Tiendalli 51) Att: 6,002

Sparta 0
PSV 1 (Gudelj og 75) Att: 9,100

Vitesse 0
Feyenoord 1 (Bahia 28) Att: 23,200

Willem II 1 (Hadouir 8)
Twente 1 (N'Kufo pen 57) Att: 11,100

Wednesday, January 18
AZ 3 (Landzaat 5, pen 60, Ikedia 81)
Den Haag 1 (Stroeve 90) Att: 8,349

Sparta 1 (Van Tornhout 70)
NEC 3 (Niedzielan 41, 47, 64) Att: 7,239

Friday, January 20
PSV 2 (Farfan 4, Beasley 76)
RKC 0 Att: 32,500

Saturday, January 21
AZ 1 (Arveladze 60)
Groningen 1 (Salmon 15) Att: 8,476

Heerenveen 0
Sparta 0 Att: 20,600

RBC 1 (Daelemans 59)
Heracles 2 (Hirayama 25, Nurmela 45) Att: 4,900

Vitesse 2 (Benson 87, 89)
Willem II 1 (Dembele 24) Att: 18,900

Sunday, January 22
Feyenoord 0
Roda JC 0 Att: 39,000

NEC 5 (Barreto 53, Jones 58, 74, Denneboom 64, Niedzielan 90)
Den Haag 0 Att: 11,750

Twente 2 (N'Kufo 25, 52)
Ajax 3 (Rosenberg 51, Maduro 89, Emanuelson 90) Att: 13,250

Utrecht 2 (Keller 33, Nelisse 47)
NAC 2 (Diba 36, Rigters 61) Att: 18,666

Friday, January 27
Roda JC 1 (Voigt 18)
AZ 4 (Arveladze 2, 39, 53, Huysegems 48) Att: 11,000

Saturday, January 28
RBC 0
Heerenveen 2 (Bruggink 31, Hansson 84) Att: 4,100

Sparta 1 (Oost 2)
Twente 0 Att: 8,180

Willem II 2 (Dembele 8, Van Mosselveld 25)
NEC 2 (Jones 76, pen 84) Att: 11,800

Sunday, January 29
Ajax 1 (Rosenberg 46)
Utrecht 4 (Ramzi 2, 48, 86, Nelisse pen 89) Att: 45,000

Den Haag 0
PSV 2 (Farfan 55, Cocu 78) Att: 6,341

Groningen 3 (Levchenko pen 18, Salmon 57, Lindgren 90)
NAC 2 (Van Gessel 56, Leonardo 74) Att: 19,100

Heracles 0
Feyenoord 4 (Kalou 25, Kuijt 36, Castelen 38, Paauwe 75) Att: 8,500

RKC 0
Vitesse 1 (Dingsdag 65) Att: 5,000

Friday, February 3
Willem II 3 (Dembele 60, Hadouir pen 90, Lammens og 90)
RBC 1 (Vos 2) Att: 13,500

Saturday, February 4
AZ 1 (Steinsson 13)
Vitesse 1 (Swerts 40) Att: 8,426

Groningen 0
Heracles 0 Att: 20,000

NAC 0
Sparta 0 Att: 15,320

PSV 3 (Vennegoor of Hesselink pen 7, 53, Aissati 65)
Roda JC 2 (Cziommer 3, Sergio 5) Att: 32,000

Sunday, February 5
Feyenoord 3 (Hofs 21, Castelen 45, Kuijt 48)
Ajax 2 (Rosenberg 23, Huntelaar 90) Att: 45,000

Heerenveen 3 (Nilsson 2, 34, 78)
Den Haag 0 Att: 20,500

RKC 1 (Fuchs 12)
NEC 3 (Denneboom 42, Boutahar 76, Niedzielan 87) Att: 4,200

Twente 3 (Bakircioglu 69, Touma 81, N'Kufo 86)
Utrecht 0 Att: 13,100

Tuesday, February 7
RBC 0
AZ 5 (Van Galen 12, Meerdink 37, Arveladze 56, 65, 83) Att: 5,000

Sparta 1 (De Fauw 84)
Groningen 0 Att: 7,225

Wednesday, February 8
Ajax 1 (Rosenberg 55)
Willem II 0 Att: 37,000

Den Haag 0
NAC 3 (Diba 10, Van Gessel 52, Leonardo 81) Att: 6,000

Heracles 1 (Tanghe 78)
Heerenveen 1 (Nilsson 45) Att: 8,500

NEC 1 (Denneboom 57)
Feyenoord 2 (Wisgerhof og 83, Kuijt 90) Att: 12,500

Roda JC 1 (Cristiano 59)
RKC 0 Att: 12,400

Utrecht 1 (Ramzi 48)
PSV 2 (Farfan 22, 78) Att: 19,615

Vitesse 1 (Hersi 5)
Twente 2 (Gerritsen 90, Touma 90) Att: 18,286

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	23	18	3	2	47	15	57
Feyenoord	23	17	3	3	59	22	54
AZ	23	16	4	3	60	21	52
NEC	23	11	5	7	32	25	38
Heerenveen	23	10	7	6	44	33	37
Ajax	23	11	4	8	38	30	37
Groningen	23	11	4	8	30	26	37
Utrecht	23	10	6	7	33	29	36
Vitesse	23	10	3	10	35	33	33
RKC	23	9	4	10	37	41	31
Roda JC	23	9	2	12	35	42	29
Twente	23	8	4	11	30	28	28
Heracles	23	7	6	10	24	42	27
Sparta	23	6	6	11	19	29	24
NAC	23	6	6	11	28	40	24
Den Haag	23	5	3	15	22	48	18
Willem II	23	3	5	15	24	48	14
RBC	23	0	5	18	13	58	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS
20 Shota Arveladze (AZ)
18 Klaas Jan Huntelaar (Heerenveen/Ajax)
17 Dirk Kuijt (Feyenoord)
14 Jefferson Farfan (PSV)

DUTCH CUP – quarter-finals

Jan 31: AZ 4 MVV 0; Helmond Sport 0 Roda JC 2.
Feb 1: Groningen 2 PSV 3.
Feb 2: Heerenveen 0 Ajax 3.

HUNGARY

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ujpest	15	10	4	1	37	16	34
Fehervar	15	10	3	2	23	9	33
Debrecen	15	9	6	0	36	19	33
MTK	15	9	4	2	33	15	31
Diosgyor	15	7	3	5	18	17	24
Honved	15	5	6	4	23	24	21
Tatabanya	15	5	4	6	23	28	19
Gyor	15	5	3	7	23	26	18
Ferencvaros	15	4	6	5	18	20	18
Pecs	15	5	2	8	24	23	17
Zalaegerszeg	15	5	1	9	24	28	16
Sopron	15	4	4	7	18	20	16
Kaposvar	15	4	4	7	13	19	16
Vasas	15	3	5	7	17	24	14
Rakospalota	15	4	1	10	16	30	13
Papa	15	0	6	9	16	44	6

ITALY

Saturday, January 14
Lecce 0
Sampdoria 3 (Diana 21, Del Vecchio og 44, Bazzani 48) Att: 11,399

Messina 0
Palermo 0 Att: 20,233

Sunday, January 15
Ascoli 3 (Ferrante 36, Bjelanovic 70, Domizzi 78)
Empoli 1 (Almiron 45) Att: 11,023

Fiorentina 2 (Toni 35, 90)
Chievo 1 (Zanchetta 70) Att: 24,173

Inter 3 (Martins 10, Adriano 14, pen 58)
Cagliari 2 (Esposito 20, Suazo 82) Att: 47,354

Juventus 1 (Del Piero 45)
Reggina 0 Att: 30,598

Livorno 2 (Morrone 24, C Lucarelli 52)
Siena 2 (Locatelli 8, Chiesa pen 59) Att: 12,706

Parma 1 (Corradi 38)
Lazio 1 (Rocchi 8) Att: 12,979

Roma 1 (Mancini 81)
Milan 0 Att: 48,822

Udinese 2 (Motta 13, Di Natale pen 72)
Treviso 2 (Pinga 33, Dellafiore 59) Att: 14,775

Wednesday, January 18
Cagliari 1 (Suazo 90)
Siena 0 Att: 10,000

Chievo 1 (Franceschini 21)
Juventus 1 (Vieira 31) Att: 18,673

Empoli 1 (Tavano pen 52)
Udinese 1 (Felipe 55) Att: 5,051

Lecce 0
Livorno 0 Att: 10,216

Messina 1 (Rafael 22)
Lazio 1 (Manfredini 78) Att: 17,737

Milan 1 (Inzaghi 5)
Ascoli 0 Att: 38,592

Palermo 4 (Corini 27, Barzagli 50, Di Michele 52, 60)
Parma 2 (Simplicio 23, Cannavaro 38) Att: 26,990

Roma 3 (Totti 4, 67, Mancini 90)
Reggina 1 (Franceschini 90) Att: 32,604

Sampdoria 3 (Palombo 12, Tonetto 25, Flachi 32)
Fiorentina 1 (Toni 14) Att: 22,586

Treviso 0
Inter 1 (Cruz 22) Att: 7,985

Saturday, January 21
Inter 3 (Cambiasso 33, Cordoba 76, Figo 80)
Palermo 0 Att: 48,942

Lazio 1 (Di Canio 36)
Cagliari 1 (Gobbi 70) Att: 21,972

Sunday, January 22
Ascoli 2 (Ferrante 5, Bjelanovic 37)
Lecce 0 Att: 8,433

Fiorentina 2 (Toni 45, 73)
Messina 0 Att: 27,848

Juventus 2 (Cannavaro 17, 77)
Empoli 1 (Almiron 3) Att: 26,292

Livorno 1 (Galante 90)
Treviso 1 (Reginaldo 8) Att: 10,920

Parma 2 (Rossi 45, Simplicio pen 83)
Chievo 1 (Amauri 26) Att: 11,848

Reggina 2 (Paredes 7, Amoruso 45)
Sampdoria 1 (Kutuzov 44) Att: 9,385

Siena 0
Milan 3 (Kaka 12, 84, Shevchenko 69) Att: 10,693

Udinese 1 (Di Natale 66)
Roma 4 (Mancini pen 40, 75, De Rossi 62, Chivu pen 84) Att: 16,524

Saturday, January 28
Milan 1 (Shevchenko pen 13)
Sampdoria 1 (Gasbarroni 36) Att: 55,395

Palermo 1 (Godeas 68)
Siena 3 (Bogdani 29, 57, 65) Att: 26,428

Sunday, January 29
Ascoli 1 (Ferrante 33)
Juventus 3 (Trezeguet 7, 13, 18) Att: 20,510

Chievo 4 (Amauri 46, pen 88, Pellissier 75, 90)
Reggina 0 Att: 4,853

Empoli 1 (Tavano pen 59)
Parma 2 (Marchionni 43, Bresciano 79) Att: 5,074

Lecce 0
Inter 2 (Figo 71, Stankovic 90) Att: 15,832

Messina 1 (Di Napoli 88)
Cagliari 0 Att: 19,476

Roma 3 (Totti 31, pen 41, Taddei 61)
Livorno 0 Att: 36,701

Treviso 0
Lazio 1 (Rocchi 87) Att: 5,071

Udinese 0
Fiorentina 0 Att: 16,728

Saturday, February 4
Parma 0
Roma 3 (Mancini 47, 72, Perrotta 77) Att: 15,608

Siena 1 (Bogdani 52)
Ascoli 1 (Comotto 39) Att: 6,991

Sunday, February 5
Cagliari 4 (Abeijon 2, Esposito 19, 62, Suazo 37)
Empoli 1 (Tavano 60) Att: 4,000

Fiorentina 1 (Toni 37)
Lecce 0 Att: 30,696

Inter 1 (Cruz 7)
Chievo 0 Att: 47,347

Juventus 1 (Del Piero 70)
Udinese 0 Att: 27,501

Lazio 0
Milan 0 Att: 29,956

Livorno 2 (C Lucarelli 55, 68)
Messina 2 (Di Napoli pen 79, pen 90) Att: 11,087

Reggina 2 (De Rosa 49, Paredes 90)
Palermo 2 (Barone 42, Caracciolo 84) Att: 13,683

Sampdoria 1 (Kutuzov 30)
Treviso 1 (Gustavo 63) Att: 20,231

Wednesday, February 8
Ascoli 0
Livorno 0 Att: 9,043

Chievo 1 (Scurto 63)
Sampdoria 1 (Kutuzov 30) Att: 5,005

Fiorentina 2 (Brocchi 10, Jimenez 60)
Inter 1 (Recoba 85) Att: 41,399

Juventus 1 (Ibrahimovic 45)
Parma 1 (Dessena 39) Att: 25,719

Lecce 1 (Ledesma pen 82)
Empoli 2 (Almiron 3, Tavano pen 41) Att: 9,753

Messina 0
Siena 0 Att: 17,779

Milan 5 (Kaka 14, Shevchenko 54, 66, Gilardino 63, Inzaghi 74)
Treviso 0 Att: 52,017

Palermo 3 (Gonzalez 12, Tedesco 58, Caracciolo 66)
Lazio 1 (Belleri 85) Att: 27,074

Roma 4 (Perrotta 25, De Rossi 35, Totti pen 80, pen 90)
Cagliari 3 (Suazo 15, Langella 19, Conti 56)

Udinese 1 (Iaquinta 16)
Reggina 2 (Amoruso 41, 64) Att: 15,046

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	24	20	3	1	49	14	63
Inter	24	17	3	4	47	18	54
Milan	24	16	3	5	53	23	51
Fiorentina	24	15	5	4	41	23	50
Roma	24	13	6	5	46	25	45
Livorno	24	10	9	5	26	25	39
Chievo	24	9	8	7	31	27	35
Sampdoria	24	9	7	8	37	31	34
Lazio	24	8	10	6	30	29	34
Palermo	24	7	9	8	35	38	30
Siena	24	6	8	10	29	38	26
Udinese	24	7	5	12	24	35	26
Reggina	24	7	5	12	25	39	26
Ascoli	24	5	10	9	24	30	25
Messina	24	4	11	9	21	31	23
Cagliari	24	5	7	12	27	39	22
Parma	24	5	7	12	27	43	22
Empoli	24	6	4	14	27	44	22
Treviso	24	2	8	14	14	36	14
Lecce	24	3	4	17	16	41	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS
22 Luca Toni (Fiorentina)
18 David Trezeguet (Juventus)
15 Francesco Totti (Roma)
14 Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)

ITALIAN CUP – quarter-finals

1st legs
Jan 24: Lazio 1 Inter 1.
Jan 25: Milan 1 Palermo 0; Udinese 1 Sampdoria 1.
Jan 26: Juventus 2 Roma 3.

2nd legs
Jan 31: Palermo 3 Milan 0 *Palermo 3-1 on agg.*
Feb 1: Roma 0 Juventus 1 *Agg 3-3. Roma on away goals*; Sampdoria 2 Udinese 2 *Agg 3-3. Udinese on away goals.*
Feb 2: Inter 1 Lazio 0 *Inter 2-1 on agg.*

POLAND

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla K	17	9	6	2	27	12	33
Legia	17	9	5	3	21	11	32
Korona	17	7	6	4	29	22	27
Amica	17	7	5	5	26	18	26
Lech	17	7	5	5	27	26	26
Zaglebie	16	7	4	5	28	22	25
Cracovia	17	7	4	6	21	24	25
Odra	17	6	6	5	16	15	24
Pogon	16	5	7	4	20	17	22
Wisla P	17	6	3	8	20	27	21
Gornik Z	17	5	4	8	19	23	19
Groclin	17	5	4	8	21	26	19
Belchatow	17	4	6	7	16	22	18
Gornik L	17	3	8	6	13	16	17
Arka	17	3	8	6	13	17	17
Polonia	17	3	3	11	10	29	12

PORTUGAL

Saturday, January 14
Belenenses 0
Sporting Lisbon 1 (Tonel 29)

Sporting Braga 1 (Wender 56)
Uniao Leiria 0

Sunday, January 15
Benfica 3 (Simao pen 4, Luisao 78, Nuno Gomes 90)
Academica 0

Estrela Amadora 2 (Mauricio 17, Coutinho 32)
FC Porto 1 (Gonzalez 60)

Maritimo 1 (Ze Carlos 79)
Gil Vicente 1 (Nuno Morais og 27)

Nacional 2 (Andre Pinto 38, Alexandre Goulart pen 66)
Pacos Ferreira 2 (Junior pen 41, Luiz Carlos 82)

Naval 0
Guimaraes 0

Rio Ave 2 (Evandro 33, Keita 72)
Penafiel 0

Monday, January 16
Setubal 0
Boavista 2 (Ze Manel 76, Manuel Jose 87)

Thursday, January 19
Penafiel 0
Sporting Braga 0

Friday, January 20
Gil Vicente 1 (Carlitos pen 9)
Benfica 3 (Simao pen 17, Geovanni 34, Marcos Antonio og 55)

Saturday, January 21
Academica 0
Nacional 0

Boavista 2 (Ricardo Silva 2, Jose Manuel pen 58)
Estrela Amadora 1 (Santamaria pen 55)

Guimaraes 1 (Saganowski 46)
Rio Ave 1 (Gaucho 13)

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Ronny 53)
Setubal 2 (Binho 21, Bruno Ribeiro 44)

FC Porto 1 (Fernando og 30)
Naval 0

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Romagnoli 8)
Maritimo 1 (Fahel 43)

Monday, January 23
Uniao Leiria 2 (Paulo Cesar 9, Toure 20)
Belenenses 2 (Sousa 74, Silas 89)

Friday, January 27
Pacos Ferreira 0
Boavista 1 (Paulo Jorge 21)

Saturday, January 28
Benfica 1 (Simao pen 27)
Sporting Lisbon 3 (Sa Pinto pen 64, Liedson 73, 82)

Naval 2 (Lito 30, Fajardo 68)
Estrela Amadora 0

Sunday, January 29
Belenenses 5 (Ahamada 21, 52, 64, Rolando 35, Romeu 45)
Penafiel 0

Maritimo 3 (Ze Carlos 61, 66, Kanu pen 78)
Uniao Leiria 0

Nacional 2 (Andre Pinto 34, Avalos 58)
Gil Vicente 0

Rio Ave 0
FC Porto 0

Sporting Braga 1 (Joao Tomas 51)
Guimaraes 0

Monday, January 30
Setubal 0
Academica 1 (Joeano 69)

Friday, February 3
Boavista 3 (Figueredo 1, Joao Pinto 6, Lucas 64)
Naval 0

Saturday, February 4
Academica 3 (Gelson 46, Mangualde og 56, Serjao 90)
Pacos Ferreira 0

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Caneira 51)
Nacional 0

Uniao Leiria 3 (Joao Paulo 33, Fabio Felicio 57, Maciel 87)
Benfica 1 (Manduca 80)

Sunday, February 5
Estrela Amadora 0
Rio Ave 0

Gil Vicente 5 (Carlitos 15, 51, Roversio 18, Carlos Carneiro 59, Mateus 86)
Setubal 0

Guimaraes 2 (Dario 45, Saganowski 61)
Belenenses 2 (Romeu 44, Ruben Amorim 63)

Penafiel 3 (Roberto 32, Dill 62, Bruno Amaro 78)
Maritimo 2 (Kanu 16, Sergio Lomba og 64)

Monday, February 6
FC Porto 1 (Gonzalez 54)
Sporting Braga 1 (Joao Tomas pen 88)

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	21	13	6	2	32	13	45
Benfica	21	12	4	5	33	19	40
Sporting Lisbon	21	12	4	5	31	21	40
Sporting Braga	21	12	4	5	22	12	40
Nacional	21	11	6	4	26	12	39
Boavista	21	9	8	4	29	19	35
Setubal	21	10	3	8	16	16	33
Uniao Leiria	21	8	4	9	27	29	28
Maritimo	21	6	9	6	27	25	27
Rio Ave	21	6	8	7	24	27	26
E Amadora	21	7	5	9	17	20	26
Academica	21	7	5	9	20	26	26
Belenenses	21	7	4	10	26	24	25
Gil Vicente	21	7	3	11	22	25	24
Pacos Ferreira	21	6	4	11	21	31	22
Naval	21	5	3	13	20	32	18
Guimaraes	21	4	5	12	12	29	17
Penafiel	21	2	5	14	15	40	11

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Nuno Gomes (Benfica)
12 Andre Pinto (Nacional)
12 Liedson (Sporting Lisbon)

PORTUGUESE CUP – last 16

Feb 8: Benfica 0 Nacional 0 (aet; Benfica 5-3 on pens); Desportivo Aves 1 Academica 2; Estrela Amadora 0 Boavista 1; Guimaraes 2 Oliveirense 0; Lixa 0 Setubal 2; Maritimo 3 Vila Mea 0; Sporting Lisbon 2 Paredes 1.

Bye to quarter-finals: FC Porto

ROMANIA

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	15	10	2	3	36	13	32
Steaua	15	9	4	2	27	10	31
National	15	8	3	4	17	17	27
Poli Timisoara	15	7	5	3	19	9	26
CFR Cluj	15	7	5	3	19	12	26
Arges	15	7	4	4	19	14	25
Rapid	15	7	4	4	19	14	25
Farul	15	7	2	6	21	20	23
Sportul	15	6	4	5	20	17	22
Poli Iasi	15	6	2	7	12	16	20
Gloria	15	5	4	6	13	19	19
Pandurii	15	3	4	8	11	20	13
Jiul	15	2	6	7	10	20	12
Bacau	15	3	3	9	10	22	12
Otelul	15	1	6	8	9	25	9
Vaslui	15	0	6	9	7	21	6

SCOTLAND

Saturday, January 14
Celtic 4 (Nakamura 3, Maloney pen 16, McManus 53, Zurawski 67)
Kilmarnock 2 (Naismith pen 24, Invincible 51) Att: 59,995

Dunfermline 1 (Burchill 58)
Hearts 4 (Pressley 28, Pospisil 54, 67, Skacel 81) Att: 8,277

Hibernian 1 (Caldwell 90)
Aberdeen 2 (Crawford 4, Mackie 14) Att: 14,572

Inverness 3 (Dargo 26, pen 57, Wyness 60)
Livingston 0 Att: 3,604

Sunday, January 15
Dundee Utd 2 (Fernandez 36, McInness 89)
Falkirk 1 (McBreen 69) Att: 7,948

Motherwell 0
Rangers 1 (Lovenkrands 55) Att: 10,689

Saturday, January 21
Dundee Utd 1 (Archibald 53)
Aberdeen 1 (Mackie 49) Att: 9,936

Falkirk 1 (Ireland 11)
Inverness 4 (Wilson 3, Wyness 18, Dargo pen 38, Tokely 56) Att: 4,772

Hibernian 3 (Riordan 17, 71, Fletcher 89)
Dunfermline 1 (Donnelly 35) Att: 13,316

Kilmarnock 1 (Invincible 46)
Hearts 0 Att: 8,811

Rangers 4 (Boyd 8, 56, Prso 89, 90)
Livingston 1 (Vincze 52) Att: 49,211

Sunday, January 22
Motherwell 1 (Hamilton 41)
Celtic 3 (Zurawski 17, McGeady 71, Hartson 85) Att: 11,503

Saturday, January 28
Aberdeen 2 (Nicholson 10, Anderson 74)
Kilmarnock 2 (Naismith pen 31, Lilley 85) Att: 10,540

Celtic 3 (Hartson 9, Zurawski 49, Petrov 67)
Dundee Utd 3 (Fernandez 40, 86, Miller 82) Att: 59,875

Dunfermline 1 (Darren Young 11)
Motherwell 1 (Hamilton 52) Att: 4,961

Hearts 4 (Hartley 27, pen 44, Skacel 41, Elliot 50)
Hibernian 1 (O'Connor 58) Att: 17,371

Livingston 0
Falkirk 1 (O'Donnell 35) Att: 4,577

Sunday, January 29
Inverness 2 (Dargo 13, Wyness 72)
Rangers 3 (Boyd 6, pen 58, Andrews 27) Att: 7,380

Tuesday, February 7
Dundee Utd 1 (Brebner 35)
Hearts 1 (Hartley pen 83) Att: 10,584

Wednesday, February 8
Aberdeen 2 (Smith 34, Lovell 43)
Rangers 0 Att: 17,087

Celtic 2 (Keane 34, McManus 44)
Falkirk 1 (Milne 83) Att: 56,672

Dunfermline 2 (Hunt 9, Burchill 11)
Inverness 2 (Dargo pen 81, Wyness 88) Att: 3,355

Hibernian 7 (Killen 19, Riordan pen 33, 64, O'Connor 48, Mackay og 70, Fletcher 89, 90)
Livingston 0 Att: 12,170

Kilmarnock 2 (Wales 34, 51)
Motherwell 0 Att: 5,169

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	25	19	4	2	65	27	61
Hearts	25	15	6	4	50	20	51
Hibernian	25	14	2	9	48	34	44
Rangers	25	12	7	6	44	30	43
Kilmarnock	25	11	7	7	46	39	40
Inverness	25	8	11	6	34	27	35
Aberdeen	25	7	11	7	29	29	32
Motherwell	25	8	6	11	38	45	30
Dundee Utd	25	6	9	10	29	40	27
Falkirk	25	5	5	15	25	50	20
Dunfermline	25	3	6	16	21	47	15
Livingston	25	2	6	17	13	54	12

LEADING GOALSCORERS
19 Kris Boyd (Kilmarnock/Rangers)
16 Rudolf Skacel (Hearts)
14 John Hartson (Celtic)
13 Peter Lovenkrands (Rangers)

SCOTTISH CUP – 3rd round (last 32)

Replays
Jan 16: Ayr 0 Inverness 2.
Jan 17: Hamilton 1 Queen of the South 0.

4th round (last 16)

Feb 4: Airdrie 1 Dundee 1; Clyde 0 Gretna 0; Falkirk 1 Ross County 1; Hamilton 0 Alloa 0; Hearts 3 Aberdeen 0; Inverness 2 Partick 2; Rangers 0 Hibernian 3.
Feb 5: Spartans 0 St Mirren 0.

Replays
Feb 7: Alloa 0 Hamilton 3.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	17	14	1	2	46	17	43
Partizan	17	13	1	3	30	13	40
Vozdovac	17	10	3	4	32	18	33
OFK	17	10	1	6	22	11	31
Zeta	17	10	1	6	27	23	31
Vojvodina	17	8	4	5	15	12	28
Hajduk K	17	7	6	4	22	19	27
Buducnost BD	17	7	1	9	15	20	22
Zemun	17	5	5	7	17	22	20
Borac	17	5	5	7	16	21	20
Smederevo	17	6	2	9	16	22	20
Rad	17	5	2	10	17	22	17
Buducnost P	17	3	7	7	14	21	16
Habitfarm	17	3	6	8	9	15	15
Obilic	17	2	4	11	14	31	10
Jedinstvo BP	17	3	1	13	12	37	10

SPAIN

Saturday, January 14
Betis 1 (Capi 30)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 45,000

Valencia 2 (Regueiro 45, Villa 52)
Osasuna 0 Att: 40,000

Sunday, January 15
Barcelona 2 (Ronaldinho pen 38, Messi 51)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Llorente 16) Att: 67,911

Deportivo La Coruna 0
Alaves 2 (Aloisi 22, Bodipo 51) Att: 15,000

Getafe 1 (Gavilan 42)
Celta Vigo 1 (Angel 47) Att: 14,000

Malaga 0
Cadiz 2 (Medina 15, 36) Att: 22,000

Racing Santander 1 (Matabuena 20)
Villarreal 0 Att: 14,117

Real Madrid 4 (Guti 7, Zidane pen 56, 60, 90)
Sevilla 2 (Luis Fabiano 51, Ocio 84) Att: 60,000

Real Sociedad 0
Espanyol 1 (Tamudo 90) Att: 19,604

Zaragoza 3 (Oscar 25, D Milito 27, 80)
Mallorca 1 (Arango 75) Att: 31,000

Saturday, January 21
Real Madrid 3 (Roberto Carlos 67, Beckham 70, Robinho 79)
Cadiz 1 (Medina 55) Att: 70,000

Zaragoza 0
Atletico Madrid 2 (Maxi Rodriguez 28, Fernando Torres pen 59) Att: 30,000

Sunday, January 22
Barcelona 2 (Larsson 46, Messi 82)
Alaves 0 Att: 72,081

Betis 0
Valencia 2 (Villa 35, 78) Att: 35,000

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Valeron 18, Diego Tristan pen 25)
Mallorca 2 (Okubo 51, Arango 54) Att: 18,000

Getafe 5 (Guiza 4, 64, Pernia 25, 74, Gavilan 85)
Espanyol 0 Att: 12,000

Malaga 0
Celta Vigo 2 (Nunez 46, Silva 70) Att: 20,000

Racing Santander 2 (Juanjo 44, Felipe Melo 84)
Sevilla 3 (Kanoute 13, Maresca pen 47, pen 54) Att: 14,609

Real Sociedad 3 (Nihat 6, 37, Skoubo 69)
Athletic Bilbao 3 (Aduritz 47, 67, Iraola 90) Att: 22,738

Villarreal 2 (Riquelme pen 70, pen 76)
Osasuna 1 (Raul Garcia 27) Att: 20,000

Saturday, January 28
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Orbaiz pen 74)
Getafe 0 Att: 34,000

Atletico Madrid 3 (Maxi Rodriguez 34, 81, Antonio Lopez 54)
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Ruben Castro 46, Capdevila 59) Att: 40,000

Cadiz 1 (Raul Lopez 74)
Racing Santander 1 (Felipe Melo pen 66) Att: 19,000

Sunday, January 29
Alaves 3 (Carpintero 34, Aloisi 57, 86)
Real Sociedad 1 (Stevanovic 89) Att: 14,317

Celta Vigo 1 (Lequi 39)
Real Madrid 2 (Robinho 16, Cicinho 56) Att: 24,000

Espanyol 3 (Tamudo 10, 20, Luis Garcia 32)
Malaga 1 (Alexis 39) Att: 14,250

Mallorca 0
Barcelona 3 (Giuly 39, Messi 75, 83) Att: 20,500

Osasuna 0
Betis 2 (Luis Fernandez 34, Edu 60) Att: 15,679

Sevilla 2 (Luis Fabiano 30, Kanoute 57)
Villarreal 0 Att: 36,000

Valencia 2 (Kluivert 82, Aimar 88)
Zaragoza 2 (Sergio Garcia 45, Ewerthon 63) Att: 45,000

Saturday, February 4
Deportivo La Coruna 0
Valencia 1 (Villa 22) Att: 28,000

Malaga 2 (Litos 30, Salva 72)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Aduritz 39) Att: 20,000

Real Madrid 4 (Guti 14, Zidane 43, 50, Ronaldo 45)
Espanyol 0 Att: 75,000

Sunday, February 5

Barcelona 1 (Larsson 60)
Atletico Madrid 3 (Fernando Torres 33, 76, Maxi Rodriguez 47) Att: 78,784

Getafe 2 (Pernia pen 3, Guiza 90)
Alaves 2 (Aloisi 12, Bodipo 75) Att: 11,500

Racing Santander 0
Celta Vigo 1 (Jesus Perera 89) Att: 14,144

Real Sociedad 2 (Skoubo 12, M Gonzalez 84)
Mallorca 1 (Pisculichi 33) Att: 19,040

Sevilla 0
Osasuna 1 (Milosevic 61) Att: 35,000

Villarreal 1 (Calleja 62)
Cadiz 1 (Medina 1) Att: 20,000

Zaragoza 4 (D Milito 10, 22, Oscar 12, Sergio Garcia 14)
Betis 3 (Dani 23, 48, 61) Att: 31,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	22	16	4	2	53	19	52
Valencia	22	12	7	3	33	19	43
Real Madrid	22	13	3	6	42	23	42
Osasuna	22	13	3	6	28	23	42
Celta Vigo	22	11	3	8	24	24	36
Villarreal	22	9	8	5	28	21	35
Sevilla	22	10	5	7	27	21	35
Dep La Coruna	22	9	6	7	30	25	33
Zaragoza	22	7	10	5	31	30	31
Getafe	22	8	5	9	31	28	29
Atletico Madrid	22	7	8	7	26	23	29
Real Sociedad	22	7	4	11	32	43	25
R Santander	22	5	9	8	19	26	24
Espanyol	22	6	6	10	20	33	24
Cadiz	22	5	7	10	17	26	22
Betis	22	5	7	10	20	31	22
Malaga	22	5	5	12	26	34	20
Athletic Bilbao	22	4	7	11	25	32	19
Alaves	22	4	7	11	21	34	19
Mallorca	22	4	6	12	21	39	18

LEADING GOALSCORERS

18	Samuel Eto'o (Barcelona)
14	David Villa (Valencia)
11	Diego Milito (Zaragoza)
11	Ronaldinho (Barcelona)
10	Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

SPANISH CUP – last 16

2nd leg
Jan 18: Zaragoza 2 Atletico Madrid 2
Zaragoza 3-2 on agg.

Quarter-finals

1st legs
Jan 18: Betis 0 Real Madrid 1; Cadiz 0 Espanyol 2.
Jan 19: Deportivo La Coruna 1 Valencia 0.
Jan 26: Zaragoza 4 Barcelona 2.

2nd legs
Jan 25: Espanyol 2 Cadiz 0 *Espanyol 4-0 on agg*; Real Madrid 1 Betis 0 *Real Madrid 2-0 on agg.*
Feb 1: Barcelona 2 Zaragoza 1 *Zaragoza 5-4 on agg*; Valencia 1 Deportivo La Coruna 1 *Deportivo La Coruna 2-1 on agg.*

Semi-finals

1st legs
Feb 8: Zaragoza 6 Real Madrid 1.
Feb 9: Espanyol 2 Deportivo La Coruna 1.

SWITZERLAND

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	18	13	3	2	47	22	42
Zurich	18	10	4	4	45	24	34
Grasshopper	18	8	6	4	27	18	30
Young Boys	18	7	7	4	26	24	28
Thun	18	7	3	8	30	33	24
St Gallen	18	6	4	8	29	28	22
Yverdon	18	6	3	9	24	30	21
Neuchatel X	18	5	2	11	24	41	17
Schaffhausen	18	4	4	10	15	28	16
Aarau	18	4	4	10	14	33	16

TURKEY

Jan 20: Fenerbahce 3 Genclerbirligi 0.
Jan 21: Ankaragucu 0 Manisaspor 2; Besiktas 2 Erciyesspor 2.
Jan 22: Ankaraspor 1 Denizlispor 3; Gaziantepspor 0 Samsunspor 1; Kayserispor 4 Trabzonspor 2; Konyaspor 0 Galatasaray 1; Malatyaspor 0 Sivasspor 0; Rizespor 2 Diyarbakirspor 0.
Feb 3: Fenerbahce 1 Rizespor 1.
Feb 4: Ankaraspor 3 Diyarbakirspor 3; Besiktas 2 Genclerbirligi 1; Kayserispor 2 Denizlispor 2.
Feb 5: Ankaragucu 1 Trabzonspor 2; Gaziantepspor 1 Manisaspor 1; Konyaspor 2 Erciyesspor 0; Malatyaspor 1 Galatasaray 1; Sivasspor 0 Samsunspor 3.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	19	15	4	0	47	18	49
Galatasaray	19	14	3	2	41	18	45
Kayserispor	19	10	3	6	36	26	33
Besiktas	19	8	5	6	28	22	29
Sivasspor	19	6	8	5	19	20	26
Trabzonspor	19	7	5	7	25	29	26
Konyaspor	19	6	7	6	24	19	25
Genclerbirligi	19	6	7	6	22	17	25
Manisaspor	19	6	6	7	24	24	24
Erciyesspor	19	5	9	5	19	23	24
Gaziantepspor	19	5	7	7	23	29	22
Samsunspor	19	5	5	9	31	37	20
Ankaragucu	19	4	7	8	20	25	19
Rizespor	19	4	7	8	16	24	19
Malatyaspor	19	4	7	8	15	28	19
Diyarbakirspor	19	5	4	10	19	35	19
Ankaraspor	19	3	9	7	26	30	18
Denizlispor	19	4	5	10	17	28	17

UKRAINE

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo	19	16	3	0	46	11	51
Shakhtar	19	15	3	1	42	8	48
Illichivets	19	9	5	5	20	19	32
Metalurh D	19	8	7	4	25	13	31
Chornomorets	19	8	4	7	25	19	28
Metalist	19	8	3	8	24	27	27
Volyn	19	8	2	9	25	32	26
FC Kharkiv	19	7	4	8	24	25	25
Dnipro	19	6	5	8	17	20	23
Vorskla	19	6	5	8	17	24	23
Stal	19	5	7	7	16	26	22
Kryvbas	19	5	5	9	15	20	20
Metalurh Z	19	5	4	10	18	28	19
Tavriya	19	5	3	11	13	23	18
Arsenal	19	4	5	10	15	27	17
Zakarpattya	19	2	5	12	11	31	11

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

Preliminary round

1st legs
Jan 24: Colo Colo (Chl) 1 Guadalajara (Mex) 3; Nacional (Par) 2 Universitario (Per) 2.
Jan 25: Palmeiras (Bra) 2 Deportivo Tachira (Ven) 0.
Jan 26: Deportivo Cuenca (Ecu) 1 Goias (Bra) 1; River Plate (Arg) 6 Oriente Petrolero (Bol) 0.
Jan 27: Defensor Sporting (Uru) 2 Independiente Santa Fe (Col) 2.

2nd legs
Jan 31: Guadalajara 5 Colo Colo 3 *Guadalajara 8-4 on agg*; Universitario 0 Nacional 0 *Agg 2-2. Universitario on away goals.*
Feb 1: Deportivo Tachira 2 Palmeiras 4 *Palmeiras 6-2 on agg*; Goias 3 Deportivo Cuenca 0 *Goias 4-1 on agg.*
Feb 2: Independiente Santa Fe 0 Defensor Sporting 0 *Agg 2-2. Independiente Santa Fe on away goals*; Oriente Petrolero 0 River Plate 2 *River Plate 8-0 on agg.*

Winners qualified for group stage

Group stage

Group 1

Feb 8
Cienciano (Per) 0
Guadalajara (Mex) 1 (Morales 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Carpio (Ecu)

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Caracas (Ven)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sao Paulo (Bra)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cienciano	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Feb 8	Cienciano-Guadalajara.....0-1
Mar 1	Caracas-Sao Paulo
Mar 7	Guadalajara-Caracas
Mar 8	Sao Paulo-Cienciano
Mar 14	Cienciano-Caracas
Mar 21	Guadalajara-Sao Paulo
Mar 28	Caracas-Cienciano
Apr 5	Sao Paulo-Guadalajara
Apr 12	Caracas-Guadalajara
Apr 12	Cienciano-Sao Paulo
Apr 20	Guadalajara-Cienciano
Apr 20	Sao Paulo-Caracas

Group 2

Feb 7
Bolivar (Bol) 1 (Gutierrez 84)
Estudiantes (Arg) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Torres (Par)

Feb 9
Sporting Cristal (Per) 1 (Soto 39)
Independiente Santa Fe (Col) 2 (Yanez 63, Montoya 89)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Brand (Ven)
Sent off: Suarez (Indep Santa Fe) 70min

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Indep Santa Fe	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Bolivar	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Sporting Cristal	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Estudiantes	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Feb 7	Bolivar-Estudiantes.....1-0
Feb 9	Sporting Cristal-Indep Santa Fe.....1-2
Feb 15	Indep Santa Fe-Bolivar
Feb 21	Estudiantes-Sporting Cristal
Mar 8	Sporting Cristal-Bolivar
Mar 9	Indep Santa Fe-Estudiantes
Mar 15	Bolivar-Sporting Cristal
Mar 21	Estudiantes-Indep Santa Fe
Mar 28	Bolivar-Indep Santa Fe
Apr 4	Sporting Cristal-Estudiantes
Apr 13	Estudiantes-Bolivar
Apr 13	Indep Santa Fe-Sporting Cristal

Group 3

Feb 9
The Strongest (Bol) 3 (Britos 35, Villar og 61, Suarez 69)
Newell's Old Boys (Arg) 2 (Colace 44, Steinert 82)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Selman (Chl)

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
The Strongest	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Goias (Bra)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
U Espanola (Chl)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newell's OB	1	0	0	1	2	3	0

Feb 9	The Strongest-Newell's OB.....3-2
Feb 14	Union Espanola-Goias
Feb 21	Newell's OB-Union Espanola
Feb 22	Goias-The Strongest
Feb 28	Union Espanola-The Strongest
Mar 15	Goias-Newell's OB
Mar 22	Newell's OB-Goias
Mar 29	The Strongest-Union Espanola
Apr 5	The Strongest-Goias
Apr 11	Union Espanola-Newell's OB
Apr 19	Goias-Union Espanola
Apr 19	Newell's OB-The Strongest

Group 4

Feb 8
Universidad Catolica (Chl) 3 (Fuenzalida 5, Quinteros 8, 67)
Tigres (Mex) 2 (Gonzalez 1, De Nigris 74)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Oliveira (Bra)

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U Catolica	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Corinthians (Bra)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dep Cali (Col)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tigres	1	0	0	1	2	3	0

Feb 8	U Catolica-Tigres.....3-2
Feb 15	Deportivo Cali-Corinthians
Feb 21	Tigres-Deportivo Cali
Feb 22	Corinthians-U Catolica
Mar 9	Tigres-Corinthians
Mar 21	U Catolica-Deportivo Cali
Mar 22	Corinthians-Tigres
Mar 30	Deportivo Cali-U Catolica
Apr 6	U Catolica-Corinthians
Apr 11	Deportivo Cali-Tigres
Apr 19	Corinthians-Deportivo Cali
Apr 19	Tigres-U Catolica

Group 5

Feb 7
LDU Quito (Ecu) 1 (Urrutia 55)
Velez Sarsfield (Arg) 3 (Somoza 37, Gracian 66, Zarate 85)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)

Feb 7
Rocha (Uru) 0
Universitario (Per) 0
Ref: Osses (Chl)

GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Velez Sarsfield	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Rocha	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Universitario	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
LDU Quito	1	0	0	1	1	3	0

Feb 7	LDU Quito-Velez Sarsfield.....1-3
Feb 7	Rocha-Universitario.....0-0
Feb 14	Velez Sarsfield-Rocha
Feb 16	Universitario-LDU Quito
Mar 7	Rocha-LDU Quito
Mar 7	Universitario-Velez Sarsfield
Mar 14	Velez Sarsfield-Universitario
Mar 16	LDU Quito-Rocha
Apr 6	LDU Quito-Universitario
Apr 11	Rocha-Velez Sarsfield
Apr 18	Universitario-Rocha
Apr 18	Velez Sarsfield-LDU Quito

Group 6

Feb 8
Nacional (Uru) 2 (Castro 16, pen 62)
Pumas UNAM (Mex) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)
Sent off: Veron (Pumas) 76min

GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Intern'nal (Bra)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UA M'caibo (Ven)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pumas UNAM	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

Feb 8	Nacional-Pumas UNAM.....2-0
Feb 16	UA Maracaibo-Internacional
Feb 22	Pumas UNAM-UA Maracaibo
Feb 23	Internacional-Nacional
Mar 8	Pumas UNAM-Internacional
Mar 9	Nacional-UA Maracaibo
Mar 16	UA Maracaibo-Nacional
Mar 22	Internacional-Pumas UNAM
Mar 30	UA Maracaibo-Pumas UNAM
Apr 4	Nacional-Internacional
Apr 18	Internacional-UA Maracaibo
Apr 18	Pumas UNAM-Nacional

Group 7
Feb 9
Atletico Nacional (Col) 1 (Diaz 16)
Rosario Central (Arg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Souza Mendonca (Bra)
Sent off: Diaz (Rosario) 84min

GROUP 7	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Nacional	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Cerro P (Par)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Palmeiras (Bra)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rosario Central	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Feb 9 Atletico Nacional-Rosario Central..1-0
Feb 15 Cerro Porteno-Palmeiras
Feb 23 Rosario Central-Cerro Porteno
Mar 2 Palmeiras-Atletico Nacional
Mar 14 Cerro Porteno-Atletico Nacional
Mar 15 Palmeiras-Rosario Central
Mar 23 Atletico Nacional-Cerro Porteno
Mar 23 Rosario Central-Palmeiras
Apr 4 Atletico Nacional-Palmeiras
Apr 6 Cerro Porteno-Rosario Central
Apr 13 Palmeiras-Cerro Porteno
Apr 13 Rosario Central-Atletico Nacional

Group 8
El Nacional (Ecu)
Libertad (Par)
Paulista (Bra)
River Plate (Arg)

Feb 14 El Nacional-Paulista
Feb 16 Libertad-River Plate
Mar 2 Paulista-Libertad
Mar 8 River Plate-El Nacional
Mar 16 River Plate-Paulista
Mar 23 Libertad-El Nacional
Mar 30 El Nacional-Libertad
Apr 5 Paulista-River Plate
Apr 12 El Nacional-River Plate
Apr 12 Libertad-Paulista
Apr 20 Paulista-El Nacional
Apr 20 River Plate-Libertad

Top two from each group qualify for 1st knockout round

ARGENTINA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, January 27
Estudiantes 4 (Calderon 2, Alayes 14, Brana 41, Carrusca 48)
Instituto 1 (Jimenez pen 72)

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Zarate 70)
San Lorenzo 1 (Saja pen 76)

Saturday, January 28
Arsenal 1 (Gonzalez 69)
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Niell 33)

Banfield 3 (Datolo 17, 54, Leiva 71)
Racing Club 0

Colon Santa Fe 1 (Fuertes 15)
Gimnasia LP 0

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Scocco 54, 63)
Quilmes 0

Olimpo 0
Rosario Central 0

Sunday, January 29
Gimnasia J 2 (Damonte 57, Silva 64)
Boca Juniors 1 (Palermo 47)

Independiente 0
Lanus 0

Tiro Federal 0
River Plate 5 (Montenegro 2, 40, Patino 13, Santana 19, Farias 63)

Tuesday, January 31
Argentinos Juniors 0
Velez Sarsfield 0

Quilmes 3 (Carrario 24, Caneo 32, pen 53)
Banfield 1 (Sand 15)

Racing Club 2 (Ubed 50, Romero pen 90)
Colon Santa Fe 2 (Denis 15, Cangele 85)

San Lorenzo 1 (Ferreyra 77)
Estudiantes 2 (Galvan 5, 67)

Wednesday, February 1
Instituto 0
Independiente 5 (Alvarez 6, Aguero 15, Armenteros 51, 71, Bustos Montoya 68)

Lanus 2 (Graf pen 61, Romero 81)
Olimpo 1 (Blanco 88)

Rosario Central 1 (Rivarola 5)
Boca Juniors 2 (Palermo 25, Palacio 39)

Thursday, February 2
Tiro Federal 2 (Campora 13, 31)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Steinert 80)

Friday, February 3
Estudiantes 2 (Pavone 14, Calderon pen 35)
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Niell 70, Alayes og 85)

Velez Sarsfield 2 (Enria 40, Somoza 76)
Gimnasia LP 1 (Cornejo 27)

Saturday, February 4
Arsenal 1 (Gonzalez 44)
Racing Club 0

Colon Santa Fe 1 (Fuertes 82)
Quilmes 0

Sunday, February 5
Banfield 2 (Leiva 25, Galvan 51)
Tiro Federal 1 (Aguiar 1)

Boca Juniors 3 (Silvestre 18, Palermo 52, Palacio 85)
Lanus 0

Gimnasia J 1 (Garcia 68)
Rosario Central 0

Independiente 1 (Bustos Montoya 10)
San Lorenzo 0

Newell's Old Boys 3 (Scocco 15, 78, Ortega 90)
River Plate 1 (Montenegro 16)

Olimpo 2 (Maggiolo 79, Delorte 81)
Instituto 0

Wednesday, February 8
Gimnasia LP 0
Arsenal 0

River Plate 2 (Dominguez 36, Farias 57)
Gimnasia J 0

ARGENTINA – CLOSING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Independiente	3	2	1	0	6	0	7
Estudiantes	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
Colon Santa Fe	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
River Plate	3	2	0	1	8	3	6
Boca Juniors	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Newell's OB	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Banfield	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Gimnasia J	3	2	0	1	3	3	6
Velez Sarsfield	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Arsenal	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
Olimpo	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Lanus	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
Argentinos Jnrs	3	0	3	0	3	3	3
Quilmes	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Tiro Federal	3	1	0	2	3	8	3
San Lorenzo	3	0	1	2	2	4	1
Gimnasia LP	3	0	1	2	1	3	1
Rosario Central	3	0	1	2	1	3	1
Racing Club	3	0	1	2	2	6	1
Instituto	3	0	0	3	1	11	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
4 Ignacio Scocco (Newell's Old Boys)
3 Daniel Montenegro (River Plate)
3 Martin Palermo (Boca Juniors)

CHILE

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Jan 27: O'Higgins 1 Colo Colo 3.
Jan 28: Huachipato 2 Antofagasta 0; Palestino 3 Santiago Wanderers 0; Puerto Montt 0 Audax Italiano 3; U de Chile 1 Union Espanola 0; Coquimbo Unido 1 U de Concepcion 1.
Jan 29: Cobresal 2 Cobreloa 4; Everton 1 U Catolica 0; Santiago Morning 4 Rangers 3.
Feb 3: Audax Italiano 3 Everton 0.
Feb 4: Rangers 1 U de Chile 2; Santiago Wanderers 0 O'Higgins 0; U Catolica 1 Puerto Montt 1.
Feb 5: Antofagasta 3 Palestino 1; Colo Colo 0 Huachipato 2; Dep La Serena 1 Cobresal 1; Cobreloa 3 Coquimbo Unido 1; U de Concepcion 1 Santiago Morning 0.

CHILE – OPENING – GROUP 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Audax Italiano	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
U Concepcion	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
U Catolica	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Cobresal	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
S Wanderers	2	0	1	1	0	3	1

GROUP 2	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
S Morning	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Everton	2	1	0	1	1	3	3
Dep La Serena	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Coquimbo U'do	2	0	1	1	2	4	1

GROUP 3	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cobreloa	2	2	0	0	7	3	6
Antofagasta	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Colo Colo	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Puerto Montt	2	0	1	1	1	4	1
Union Espanola	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

GROUP 4	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Huachipato	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Palestino	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
O'Higgins	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
Dep Concepcion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rangers	2	0	0	2	4	6	0

COLOMBIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 4: America 0 Dep Cali 3.
Feb 5: At Huila 1 Millonarios 1; Indep Santa Fe 0 Tolima 2; Dep Pasto 1 Pereira 1; Quindio 1 Real Cartagena 0; Indep Medellin 2 Bucaramanga 0; At Junior 3 Envigado 2; Cucuta 3 At Nacional 2; Once Caldas 2 Chico 2.

COLOMBIA – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cali	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Indep Medellin	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Tolima	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
At Junior	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Cucuta	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Quindio	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Chico	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Once Caldas	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
At Huila	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Dep Pasto	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Millonarios	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Pereira	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
At Nacional	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
Envigado	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
Real Cartagena	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Bucaramanga	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Indep Santa Fe	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
America	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

ECUADOR

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Jan 28: Macara 0 Olmedo 1.
Jan 29: LDU Quito 3 Dep Quito 2; Aucas 1 Barcelona 0; Espoli 3 Dep Cuenca 1; Emelec 0 El Nacional 2.
Feb 1: Olmedo 1 LDU Quito 0; Dep Quito 0 Espoli 3; Barcelona 1 Macara 2; El Nacional 4 Aucas 0.
Feb 4: LDU Quito 3 El Nacional 2.
Feb 5: Olmedo 1 Barcelona 0; Aucas 2 Dep Cuenca 1; Macara 0 Dep Quito 0; Emelec 4 Espoli 1.
Feb 8: Dep Cuenca 2 Emelec 0.

ECUADOR – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olmedo	3	3	0	0	3	0	9
El Nacional	3	2	0	1	8	3	6
Espoli	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
LDU Quito	3	2	0	1	6	5	6
Aucas	3	2	0	1	3	5	6
Macara	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Dep Cuenca	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Emelec	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Dep Quito	3	0	1	2	2	6	1
Barcelona	3	0	0	3	1	4	0

PARAGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Jan 27: 2 de Mayo 0 Fernando de la Mora 0; Nacional 1 Cerro Porteno 1.
Jan 28: 3 de Febrero 0 Libertad 3; Sportivo Luqueno 1 Tacuary 1.
Jan 29: 12 de Octubre 1 Olimpia 0.
Feb 3: Olimpia 2 2 de Mayo 0.
Feb 4: Libertad 3 Nacional 1.
Feb 5: Tacuary 3 3 de Febrero 2; Cerro Porteno 3 12 de Octubre 0; Fernando de la Mora 1 Guarani 2.

PARAGUAY – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Cerro Porteno	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Tacuary	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Guarani	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Olimpia	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
12 de Octubre	2	1	0	1	1	3	3
Sp Luqueno	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
F'do de la Mora	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Nacional	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
2 de Mayo	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
3 de Febrero	2	0	0	2	2	6	0

PERU

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 3: Universitario 1 Melgar 2.
Feb 4: Cienciano 2 Sporting Cristal 0; Sport Boys 1 Sport Ancash 1.
Feb 5: Jose Galvez 0 Union Huaral 3; Universidad SMP 1 Alianza Lima 1; Alianza Atletico 1 Coronel Bolognesi 3.

PERU – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Union Huaral	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
C Bolognesi	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Cienciano	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Melgar	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Alianza Lima	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Sport Ancash	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Sport Boys	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Univ SMP	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Universitario	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Alianza Atletico	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Sporting Cristal	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Jose Galvez	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

VENEZUELA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Jan 15: Aragua 1 Estudiantes 0; Mineros Guayana 1 Carabobo 0; Dep Tachira 1 ItalMaracaibo 0; UA Maracaibo 1 Caracas 1; Trujillanos 2 Monagas 0.
Jan 20: Dep Tachira 2 Carabobo 6.
Jan 22: Monagas 0 Aragua 0; Caracas 2 Trujillanos 1; ItalMaracaibo 1 UA Maracaibo 1; Estudiantes 2 Mineros Guayana 0.
Jan 28: Dep Tachira 1 Estudiantes 0.
Jan 29: Aragua 3 Mineros Guayana 0; UA Maracaibo 1 Carabobo 1; Trujillanos 2 ItalMaracaibo 2; Monagas 0 Caracas 0.
Feb 5: Mineros Guayana 1 Dep Tachira 1; Caracas 4 Aragua 2; ItalMaracaibo 2 Monagas 2; Estudiantes 1 UA Maracaibo 1; Carabobo 1 Trujillanos 1.

VENEZUELA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Caracas	5	2	3	0	7	4	9
Carabobo	5	2	2	1	11	7	8
Trujillanos	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Dep Tachira	5	2	2	1	5	7	8
Aragua	5	2	1	2	6	5	7
Mineros G'ana	5	2	1	2	4	6	7
UA Maracaibo	5	0	5	0	4	4	5
Estudiantes	5	1	1	3	5	6	4
Monagas	5	0	4	1	2	4	4
ItalMaracaibo	5	0	3	2	5	8	3

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS CUP

Quarter-finals draw

Los Angeles Galaxy (USA) v Saprissa (CR)*
New England Revolution (USA) v Alajuelense (CR)
Olimpia (Hnd) v Toluca (Mex)
Portmore Utd (Jam) v America (Mex)

*1st legs – February 22 (*1st leg – February 23);*
2nd legs – March 8

MEXICO

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Jan 20: Tecos UAG 2 San Luis 1.
Jan 21: Toluca 3 Necaxa 1; Jaguares 3 Guadalajara 1; Atlante 0 Dorados 0; Morelia 0 Cruz Azul 1; Tigres 1 America 1; Atlas 2 Veracruz 0.
Jan 22: Pumas UNAM 1 Santos 0; Pachuca 3 Monterrey 0.
Jan 28: Cruz Azul 1 Atlas 1; Monterrey 1 Morelia 0; Veracruz 1 Tecos UAG 2; Guadalajara 2 Pumas UNAM 2; Dorados 1 Tigres 1; Necaxa 1 Jaguares 0.
Jan 29: San Luis 1 Toluca 3; Santos 3 Atlante 4; America 2 Pachuca 3.
Feb 1: Toluca 2 Veracruz 1; Tigres 1 Santos 0; Tecos UAG 2 Cruz Azul 1; Jaguares 1 San Luis 1; Atlas 1 Monterrey 0; Pumas UNAM 0 Necaxa 0.
Feb 2: Dorados 2 America 0; Morelia 1 Pachuca 1.
Feb 4: Cruz Azul 2 Toluca 1; Monterrey 2 Tecos UAG 3; Guadalajara 1 Tigres 0; Veracruz 2 Jaguares 3; Necaxa 1 Atlante 2.
Feb 5: San Luis 3 Pumas UNAM 0; Pachuca 3 Atlas 0; America 3 Morelia 0; Santos 1 Dorados 1.

MEXICO – CLOSING – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tecos UAG	4	4	0	0	9	5	12
Atlante	3	2	1	0	6	4	7
America	4	1	1	2	6	6	4
San Luis	4	1	1	2	6	6	4
Necaxa	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Morelia	4	0	1	3	1	6	1

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pachuca	4	3	1	0	10	3	10
Toluca	4	3	0	1	9	5	9
Dorados	4	1	3	0	4	2	6
Pumas UNAM	4	1	2	1	3	5	5
Santos	4	0	1	3	4	7	1
Veracruz	4	0	0	4	4	9	0

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jaguares	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Cruz Azul	4	2	1	1	5	4	7
Atlas	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
Tigres	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Guadalajara	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Monterrey	4	1	0	3	3	7	3

LEADING GOALSCORERS
5 Patricio Galaz (Atlante)
5 Ariel Gonzalez (San Luis)

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

1st round draw

Renaicemento (EqG) v Africa Sport (IvC)
Stade Malien (Mli) v Satellite (Gui)
Kenya representatives v Red Sea (Eri)
RC Kadiogo (BuF) v USM Alger (Alg)
AS Douanes (Tog) v Port Autonome (Sen)
Civics (Nam) v Sagrada Esperanca (Ang)
East End Lions (SLe) v ASEC Abidjan (IvC)
Mbabane Swallows (Swa) v Orlando Pirates (SAf)
AS Port Louis 2000 (Mrs) v Coin Nord Mitsamiouli (Com)
Police (Uga) v Al Hilal (Sud)
Police XI (Bot) v Enugu Rangers (Nig)
Mangasport (Gab) v Enyimba (Nig)
LPRC Oilers (Lbr) v Diaraf Dakar (Sen)
Renaissance FC (Chd) v Cotonsport (Cam)
FC St Eloi Lupopo (DRC) v AS Police (Con)
Central African Republic representatives v Daring Club Motema Pembe (DRC)
AS FNIS (Ngr) v CS Sfaxien (Tun)
APR FC (Rwa) v AS Aviacao (Ang)
Aigle Royal Menoua (Cam) v Asante Kotoko (Gha)
La Passe (Sey) v Ferroviario Maputo (Moz)
Likhopo (Les) v Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf)
Excelsior St Joseph (Reu) v USCAFOOT (Mad)
Wallidan (Gam) v Hearts of Oak (Gha)
St George (Eth) v ENPPI (Egy)
AS Polisi (Zan) v Civo United (Mwi)
Al Ittihad (Lby) v JS Kabylie (Alg)
Young Africans (Tan) v ZANACO (Zam)
Inter Stars (Brd) v CAPS United (Zim)
ASC Ahmedi (Mau) v Raja Casablanca (Mor)

1st legs – February 17/18/19;
2nd legs – March 3/4/5

Byes to 2nd round: Al Ahly (Egy), Etoile Sahel (Tun), FAR Rabat (Mor)

2nd round draw

Stade Malien or Satellite v Renaicemento or Africa Sport
Kenya representatives or Red Sea v Al Ahly
AS Douanes or Port Autonome v RC Kadiogo or USM Alger
East End Lions or ASEC Abidjan v Civics or Sagrada Esperanca
AS Port Louis 2000 or Coin Nord Mitsamiouli v Mbabane Swallows or Orlando Pirates
Police XI or Enugu Rangers v Police or Al Hilal
LPRC Oilers or Diaraf Dakar v Mangasport or Enyimba
FC St Eloi Lupopo or AS Police v Renaissance FC or Cotonsport
AS FNIS or CS Sfaxien v Central African Republic representatives or Daring Club Motema Pembe
APR FC or AS Aviacao v FAR Rabat
La Passe or Ferroviario Maputo v Aigle Royal Menoua or Asante Kotoko
Excelsior St Joseph or USCAFOOT v Likhopo or Mamelodi Sundowns
St George or ENPPI v Wallidan or Hearts of Oak
AS Polisi or Civo United v Etoile Sahel
Young Africans or ZANACO v Al Ittihad or JS Kabylie
ASC Ahmedi or Raja Casablanca v Inter Stars or CAPS United

1st legs – March 17/18/19;
2nd legs – March 31/April 1/2

CONFEDERATION CUP

1st round draw

ASC Entente (Mau) v ASO Chlef (Alg)
Sahel SC (Ngr) v Sewe Sport (IvC)
Esperance Zarzis (Tun) v US Ouagadougou (BuF)
Akonangui (EqG) v Cameroon representatives
TP USCA Bangui (CAR) v Astres Douala (Cam)
Tourbillon (Chd) v Diables Noirs (Con)
Bakau United (Gam) v Jeunesse Club Abidjan (IvC)
Al Akhdar (Lby) v Harass Al Hodoud (Egy)
Rayon Sports (Rwa) v Awassa City (Eth)
Mighty Blackpool (SLe) v Compaigne Sucre Senegalaise (Sen)
Kenya representatives v Uganda Revenue Authority (Uga)
Dyto (Tog) v AS Bamako (Mli)
AS Kabasha (DRC) v Sogea (Gab)
SMB (Sey) v Township Rollers (Bot)
ZESCO (Zam) v Pointe aux Sable Mates (Mrs)
Zimbabwe representatives v Moro United (Tan)
Ferroviario Beira (Moz) v Elan Club Mitsoudje (Com)
JKU (Zan) v USJF Ravinala (Mad)

1st legs – February 17/18/19;
2nd legs – March 3/4/5

Byes to 2nd round: Al Ittihad (Egy), Al Merreikh (Sud), AS Douanes (Sen), AS Kaloum (Gui), Berekum Arsenal (Gha), Esperance (Tun), InterClube (Ang), Iwuanyanwu Nationale (Nig), King Faisal Babes (Gha), Lobi Stars (Nig), NA Hussein-Dey (Alg), Olympique Khouribga (Mor), Petro Atletico (Ang), TP Mazembe Englebert (DRC)

2nd round draw

ASC Entente or ASO Chlef v AS Douanes
Sahel SC or Sewe Sport v NA Hussein-Dey
Esperance Zarzis or US Ouagadougou v Olympique Khouribga
Akonangui or Cameroon representatives v Lobi Stars
TP USCA Bangui or Astres Douala v Petro Atletico
Tourbillon or Diables Noirs v Berekum Arsenal
Bakau United or Jeunesse Club Abidjan v Iwuanyanwu Nationale
Al Akhdar or Harass Al Hodoud v AS Kaloum
Rayon Sports or Awassa City v Al Ittihad
Mighty Blackpool or Compaigne Sucre Senegalaise v Esperance
Kenya representatives or Uganda Revenue Authority v Al Merreikh
Dyto or AS Bamako v King Faisal Babes
AS Kabasha or Sogea v InterClube
ZESCO or Pointe aux Sable Mates v SMB or Township Rollers
Zimbabwe representatives or Moro United v TP Mazembe Englebert
JKU or USJF Ravinala v Ferroviario Beira or Elan Club Mitsoudje

1st legs – March 17/18/19;
2nd legs – March 31/ April 1/2

NIGERIA

NIGERIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enyimba	38	21	9	8	63	22	72
Enugu Rangers	38	20	7	11	33	22	67
Iwuan'wu Nat.	38	20	5	13	35	30	65
Gombe Utd	38	19	7	12	37	28	64
Shooting Stars	38	17	7	14	40	35	58
Dolphin	38	18	4	16	37	34	58
Julius Berger	38	17	4	17	33	38	55
Sharks	38	16	6	16	42	37	54
Lobi Stars	38	15	8	15	41	38	53
Kwara Utd	38	15	8	15	32	32	53
Kano Pillars	38	16	5	17	37	40	53
Bendel Ins'nce	38	16	3	19	44	49	51
Nasarawa Utd	38	16	3	19	39	50	51
Niger T'does	38	14	8	16	38	35	50
El-Kanemi W'rs	38	15	5	18	39	39	50
Wikki Tourists	38	14	8	16	28	33	50
Ports Authority	38	13	8	17	40	47	47
Gabros Intl	38	13	7	18	36	49	46
Zamfara Utd	38	12	8	18	34	47	44
Gateway	38	8	10	20	27	50	34

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Draw

Group A
Al Ittihad (Syr)
Al Qadisiya (Kuw)
Foolad (Irn)
Pakhtakor (Uzb)

Group B
Al Ain (UAE)
Al Hilal (Sau)
Al Minaa (Irq)
Mashal (Uzb)

Group C
Al Gharafa (Qat)
Al Karama (Syr)
Al Wahda (UAE)
Saba Battery (Irn)

Group D
Al Arabi (Kuw)
Al Quwa Al Jawiya (Irq)
Al Sadd (Qat)
Al Shabab (Sau)

Group E
Chonbuk Motors (SKo)
Da Nang (Vie)
Dalian Shide (Chn)
Gamba Osaka (Jap)

Group F
Arema Malang (Ins)
Tobacco Monopoly (Tha)
Tokyo Verdy 1969 (Jap)
Ulsan Hyundai (SKo)

Group G
Dong Tam Long An (Vie)
Persipura Jayapura (Ins)
Provincial Electrical Authority (Tha)
Shanghai Shenhua (Chn)

Group winners qualify for quarter-finals.
Bye to quarter-finals: Al Ittihad (Sau; holders).
Matchdays: March 8, March 22, April 12, April 26, May 3, May 17

AFC CUP

Draw

Group A
Al Ahed (Leb)
Brothers Union (Ban)
Mahindra United (Ind)
Muharraq (Bhn)

Group B
Al Hilal (Yem)
Al Nasr (Oma)
Dempo (Ind)
MERW (Tkm)

Group C
Al Wihdat (Jor)
Dhofar (Oma)
Mohammedan (Ban)

Group D
Al Faisaly (Jor)
Al Nijmeh (Leb)
MTTU (Tkm)

Group E
Home United (Sin)
New Radiant (Mdv)
Perlis (Mly)
Sun Hei (HK)

Group F
Happy Valley (HK)
Hurriya (Mdv)
Selangor (Mly)
Tampines Rovers (Sin)

Group winners and the two runners-up with the best records against the teams finishing 1st and 3rd in their respective groups qualify for quarter-finals.
Matchdays: March 7, March 21, April 11, April 25, May 2, May 16

the Knowledge

everything you need to know about...

Clubs with the same name

MANY CLUBS IN South America were founded by Englishmen at the turn of the 20th century and a handful took on the names of English clubs. One of the best known is Chile's Everton, who were formed by English immigrants in 1909 shortly after the English club of that name had completed a tour of South America. Links between the two clubs have developed over the years. A group of English Evertonians have formed the Ruleteros Society – named after the nickname for the Chilean Everton. *Ruleteros* means roulette players; Vina del Mar, the club's base, has many casinos.

Liverpool, based in the Uruguayan capital, Montevideo, were founded in 1915 by a group of college students. They needed a name for their club in order to take part in a nationwide competition and reportedly chose Liverpool after looking at a map of the world during a geography lesson. There are few similarities between the clubs; the Uruguayan version play in blue and black striped shirts and have never won their domestic championship. In Namibia, a club called Liverpool play in red shirts and white shorts. They won the Cup in 1992 and the League for the first time in 2002. There is also a Kenyan Liverpool, based in Mombasa.

Simply not red…Liverpool of Montevideo

The oldest club in Chile with an English name are Rangers, who were founded in 1902 in Talca by a group of local businessmen. There are few connections with the Scottish club, though they do play in red and black hooped shirts, often used as a second strip by Glasgow Rangers.

Ajax of Amsterdam have had formal links with South Africa's Cape Town Ajax for a number of years, with the latter providing a number of young players, including Benni McCarthy and Steven Pienaar. Dutch rivals Feyenoord are hoping for a similarly productive relationship with Feyenoord Academy, the satellite club they have established in Ghana.

Two more clubs with formal links are Chivas of Guadalajara and Chivas USA, who are both owned by Mexican businessman Jorge Vergara.

Australian club Newcastle United Jets have no formal links with their English namesakes; a satellite club link-up was mooted a few years ago but never formally developed. The Aussie club added the Jets moniker when the A-League launched last year.

Arsenal is the most widely copied of English club names. Arsenal Futbol Club di Sarandi were founded in Argentina in 1957 by a group of fans that included Julio Grondona, now the president of the Argentinian FA and a FIFA vice-president. The club, from a suburb of Buenos Aires, were promoted to the top flight in 2002.

Fan factor…Argentina's Arsenal (in red)

In Ukraine, CSKA Kyiv renamed themselves Arsenal Kyiv during the winter break in the 2001-02 season. Arsenal of Lesotho were founded in 1983 by a group of fans of the English club. They play in red shirts and white shorts and are even nicknamed the Gunners. They won the League title in 1989, 1991 and 1993.

English club names are popular elsewhere in Africa. In Mauritius, West Bromwich Albion from Beau Bassin currently play in the Second Division. In Ghana, Queen's Park Rangers play at Prempeh College Park, Kumasi, while Blackpool have namesakes in Gambia, Sierra Leone and Zambia. Roman Abramovich may not be aware of it but Chelsea of Namibia play at the 5,000-capacity Omulunga stadium in Grootfontein.

Old boy…Kaviedes at Ecuador's Barcelona

Not all English names have stuck, though. In 2004, Zambian club Blackburn were renamed Chambishi.

In Ecuador, Barcelona of Guayaquil were founded in 1925 by a Spanish immigrant, Eutimi Perez, and named after his favourite club. They have a similar badge, but play in yellow shirts and black shorts. They have twice reached the Libertadores Cup Final, and former players include prolific national team striker Ivan Kaviedes.

Very few Italian names have been adopted by overseas clubs but there is a Juventus in Belize. They play in the town of Orange Walk.

DON'T MISS… THE THIRD OF OUR WORLD CUP BOOKLETS

APRIL ISSUE
ON SALE MARCH 17

WORLD SOCCER
AHEAD OF THE GAME
www.worldsoccer.com

WORLD CUP 2006

The **WORLD SOCCER** Essential Guide

PART TWO

England
France
Germany
Ghana
Holland
Iran
Italy
Ivory Coast

The
WORLD
SOCCER
Essential
Guide

WORLD CUP 2006

PART TWO

4 England
6 France
8 Germany
10 Ghana
12 Holland
14 Iran
16 Italy
18 Ivory Coast
20 Finals schedule

Sheikh, rattle and roll

Coach Eriksson's extra-curricular activities and the debate about who should succeed him could destabilise the otherwise well-prepared squad

ENGLAND'S PREPARATIONS for Germany risk being undermined by the row over the comments by coach Sven Goran Eriksson to an undercover tabloid newspaper reporter dressed as a wealthy sheikh. Until now, the Swede's greatest strength has been his strong bond with his players, but that relationship has been weakened by his indiscreet comments about captain David Beckham, striker Michael Owen and defender Rio Ferdinand.

The FA subsequently announced that Eriksson would leave his post after the World Cup, and not see out his lucrative contract, which runs until 2008. This raises another potential distraction for the players – the debate about who should succeed the Swede.

The chances of Eriksson leaving on a high were strengthened by the World Cup draw, which handed England a relatively easy group – they face Paraguay, Trinidad & Tobago and 2002 foes Sweden. The added incentive to win the group is that England would most likely go on to face Poland, who they bettered during the qualifying campaign, and, more importantly, avoid a match-up with hosts Germany.

Eriksson has a settled squad, with many of the key players approaching their peak and playing regularly at the highest level of the European club game. In addition, Wayne Rooney has emerged as a genuine world-class talent, though his sometimes poor temperament can reduce his effectiveness.

The only real selection issues surround injury-troubled players such as Jonathan Woodgate and Wayne Bridge and whether they can force themselves back into the reckoning. Few players are likely to make a late run for a squad place, which is good news for Shaun Wright-Phillips, who has had few first-team opportunities since joining Chelsea last summer.

The first XI is already clear – Paul Robinson in goal; a defence of Gary Neville, Ashley Cole, Ferdinand and John Terry; Beckham, Frank Lampard, Steven Gerrard and Joe Cole in midfield; Rooney and Owen up front.

Eriksson still needs to resolve the problem of playing Lampard and Gerrard in central midfield – both players are happier in attacking mode than when given defensive duties. With the coach refusing to contemplate a switch to a 3-5-2 formation, one option would be to use Tottenham defender Ledley King as a midfield shield, as he was in the 3-2 friendly win against Argentina in November.

England have the raw material to reach the semi-finals and beyond. But luck, as always, will play a part.

Gavin Hamilton

Falls from grace…Rooney's sometimes poor temperament can make him less effective

The Squad

Key Men

WAYNE ROONEY
England's most important player, despite being just 20, and the main reason why hopes of World Cup success are so high in the country. However, questions remain about his temperament; talking back to referees continues to be a problem.

FRANK LAMPARD
The Chelsea midfielder continues to grow in stature and is now considered a more important figure in the England midfield than Steven Gerrard.

DAVID BECKHAM
The long-time captain has been playing well in Spain despite Real Madrid's malaise. He enjoys a close – some would say too close – relationship with Eriksson, and that could prove problematic if his form drops in the run-up to Germany.

The Coach

SVEN GORAN ERIKSSON
The Swede, in charge for more than five years, is to leave the post after the finals, probably returning to club football. The 58-year-old's involvement in a number of scandals, coupled with his high salary, led to strong criticism in the media and from the fans. England reached the quarter-finals of both the 2002 World Cup and Euro 2004 during his time in charge.

	Club	DOB	Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS				
David JAMES	Manchester City	01.08.70	33	0
Chris KIRKLAND	West Bromwich	02.05.81	0	0
Paul ROBINSON	Tottenham	15.10.79	18	0
DEFENDERS				
Wayne BRIDGE	Fulham (Chelsea loan)	05.08.80	21	1
Sol CAMPBELL	Arsenal	18.09.74	66	1
Jamie CARRAGHER	Liverpool	28.01.78	22	0
Ashley COLE	Arsenal	20.12.80	44	0
Rio FERDINAND	Manchester Utd	07.11.78	44	1
Ledley KING	Tottenham	12.10.80	15	1
Gary NEVILLE	Manchester Utd	18.02.75	77	0
Phil NEVILLE	Everton	21.01.77	52	0
John TERRY	Chelsea	07.12.80	21	0
Jonathan WOODGATE	Real Madrid (Spa)	22.01.80	5	0
Luke YOUNG	Charlton	19.07.79	7	0
MIDFIELDERS				
David BECKHAM	Real Madrid (Spa)	02.05.75	86	16
Michael CARRICK	Tottenham	28.07.81	4	0
Joe COLE	Chelsea	08.11.81	29	4
Stewart DOWNING	Middlesbrough	22.07.84	1	0
Kieron DYER	Newcastle	29.12.78	28	0
Steven GERRARD	Liverpool	30.05.80	39	6
Owen HARGREAVES	Bayern Munich (Ger)	20.01.81	29	0
Jermaine JENAS	Tottenham	18.02.83	14	0
Frank LAMPARD	Chelsea	20.06.78	38	10
Scott PARKER	Newcastle	13.10.80	2	0
Shaun WRIGHT-PHILLIPS	Chelsea	25.10.81	7	1
FORWARDS				
Peter CROUCH	Liverpool	30.01.81	4	0
Jermain DEFOE	Tottenham	07.10.82	15	1
Michael OWEN	Newcastle	14.12.79	75	35
Wayne ROONEY	Manchester Utd	24.10.85	28	11
Darius VASSELL	Manchester City	13.06.80	22	6

Hit squad

***Les Bleus* can go all the way if their supremely talented individuals can gel as a unit**

THE FRENCH PUBLIC showed they were capable of some wild mood swings during the qualifying campaign, veering between boundless optimism and the very blackest of pessimistic outlooks. That's not altogether surprising given that the team, while packed with individual talent, kept everyone biting their fingernails to the last minute until the finals place was assured.

Now, everyone is upbeat going into the tournament after France were drawn with South Korea, Switzerland and Togo.

"It's a nice little group," said keeper Gregory Coupet with admirable understatement. The consensus is that if France can't reach the next round, then they'd better not bother coming back from Germany at all.

But coach Raymond Domenech played down the positives of the draw while accentuating the negatives in order to take the pressure off his team. Domenech was quick to remind French fans that he had bad memories of South Korea; the talismanic Zinedine Zidane was injured in a friendly against the Koreans just five days before the opening match of the 2002 finals (Zidane's absence was widely seen as a major factor in France's abject showing at the tournament, when they finished bottom of their group).

The coach then said meeting Switzerland wasn't such a great thing because the two teams knew each other so well after being in the same qualifying group.

Domenech finished things off by reminding everyone that France's group in 2002 hadn't seemed all that daunting on paper either.

Still, Domenech has just one major uncertainty to resolve – whether to play Fabien Barthez or Coupet in goal – and his squad looks nicely balanced and well settled, with an abundance of talent in every department. Who wouldn't want to be picking his strikers from Thierry Henry, David Trezeguet, Sylvain Wiltord, Nicolas Anelka, Djibril Cisse and Louis Saha? Which other country has the players to match the inventive talents of Zidane, the combative drive of Patrick Vieira and the destructive power of Claude Makelele in the engine-room? And which other national team has such strength in depth that it could contemplate overlooking talents such as Robert Pires, Mickael Silvestre and Johan Micoud?

There are some points of debate – about whether the defence is sufficiently rugged to withstand the world's most fearsome attacks; whether it's a problem that some of the team's key men are knocking on a bit; and whether or not to include Marseille's dynamic but uncapped midfielder Franck Ribery in the squad for Germany.

But the only real issue is whether France's supremely talented individuals can gel when it matters. If they can, then anything's possible.

Howard Johnson

Tower of power… Claude Makelele gets above Switzerland's Raphael Wicky during the qualifying campaign

The Squad

Key Men

THIERRY HENRY
The forward is not loved by *Les Bleus* fans with anything like the fervour of Arsenal supporters and he knows he needs a massive World Cup to convince everyone he really is an international great. The whole of France recognises his talent, but reckon he's lacked the necessary consistency in a blue shirt.

ZINEDINE ZIDANE

The entire country was lifted when Zizou ended his international retirement during the difficult qualifying campaign to help France get to Germany; the big question is whether he'll still have the legs at the end of a long season to weave his magic at the finals.

PATRICK VIEIRA
The former Arsenal man, who has enjoyed a storming first few months with Juventus, is the most dynamic of midfield competitors. Now he has the chance to establish himself as the world's best in Germany. Vieira's power, commitment and will to win will be crucial at the finals.

The Coach

RAYMOND DOMENECH

The team's sum hasn't always been greater than the constituent parts under Domenech, the former Under-21s boss who took the senior reins from Jacques Santini after Euro 2004. Now, on the big stage, with big talent at his disposal, he must deliver.

	Club	DOB	Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS				
Fabien BARTHEZ	Marseille	28.06.71	76	0
Gregory COUPET	Lyon	31.12.72	18	0
Mickael LANDREAU	Nantes	14.05.79	3	0
DEFENDERS				
Eric ABIDAL	Lyon	11.07.79	4	0
Jean-Alain BOUMSONG	Newcastle (Eng)	14.12.79	17	1
Patrice EVRA	Manchester Utd (Eng)	15.05.81	5	0
William GALLAS	Chelsea (Eng)	17.08.77	37	1
Gael GIVET	Monaco	09.10.81	11	0
Bernard MENDY	Paris Saint-Germain	20.08.81	3	0
Anthony REVEILLERE	Lyon	10.11.79	5	0
Willy SAGNOL	Bayern Munich (Ger)	18.03.77	34	0
Sebastien SQUILLACI	Monaco	11.08.80	10	0
Lilian THURAM	Juventus (Ita)	01.01.72	110	2
Jonathan ZEBINA	Juventus (Ita)	19.07.78	1	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Vikash DHORASOO	Paris Saint-Germain	10.10.73	14	1
Alou DIARRA	Lens	15.07.81	7	0
Ludovic GIULY	Barcelona (Spa)	10.07.76	17	3
Sidney GOVOU	Lyon	27.07.79	19	3
Claude MAKELELE	Chelsea (Eng)	18.02.73	40	0
Florent MALOUDA	Lyon	13.06.80	9	1
Camel MERIEM	Monaco	18.10.79	3	0
Jerome ROTHEN	Paris Saint-Germain	31.03.78	11	0
Patrick VIEIRA	Juventus (Ita)	23.06.76	83	4
Zinedine ZIDANE	Real Madrid (Spa)	23.06.72	98	28
FORWARDS				
Nicolas ANELKA	Fenerbahce (Tur)	14.03.79	30	7
Djibril CISSE	Liverpool (Eng)	12.08.81	27	9
Thierry HENRY	Arsenal (Eng)	17.08.77	75	31
Louis SAHA	Manchester Utd (Eng)	08.08.78	8	2
David TREZEGUET	Juventus (Ita)	15.10.77	60	31
Sylvain WILTORD	Lyon	10.05.74	76	24

Confidence without class

German fans believe their team can go far, but Ballack is the only superstar in the ranks

IN A BID to promote a feel-good factor at a time of recession and high unemployment, German TV has been running a series of adverts vaunting the achievements of the nation. But football fans have no need of such rousing – they are already pumped up about Germany's prospects at the World Cup, with over two-thirds of those polled by *Kicker* magazine saying they expected the hosts to reach the semi-finals at least.

Such confidence is virtually a reflex response for Germans. After all, their national team have an enviable record at the finals – winners three times, runners-up four times – and the uncanny ability to grind out results in big tournaments. Indeed, with midfield superstar Michael Ballack arguably the only world-class player in their ranks, the *Nationalmannschaft* can hope to compete only by displaying high levels of organisation and desire.

Germany are bound to benefit from playing on home soil, and they received a further boost when drawn with Costa Rica, Poland and Ecuador. "It could have been worse; the draw gives us every possibility," said coach Jurgen Klinsmann in a moment of sheer understatement.

To combat any complacency, players and followers would do well to cast their minds back to their shoddy displays in friendlies last autumn. A fortunate 2-2 draw in Holland and away defeats against Slovakia (2-0) and Turkey (2-1) had the media serving the coach with a long list of indictments: possession of a porous back-line and use of an inflexible 4-4-2 system, a midfield low on creativity, the insistence on rotating keepers Oliver Kahn and Jens Lehmann, and the fact that Klinsmann continues to live in California.

But despite the critics' barbs, the former Germany forward has, on the whole, done a good job. His record of 12 wins and just four defeats in 22 games is reasonable. Also, by introducing a number of impressive youngsters (notably Koln striker Lukas Podolski, Bayern Munich midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger and Chelsea stopper Robert Huth) Klinsmann has given the team a vital shot of enthusiasm and freshness. In addition, the coach clearly has the respect of the players and has proved himself a meticulous and innovative organiser, never afraid of utilising new-fangled methods to prepare his charges both physically and mentally.

The all-important question, though, is whether his side have sufficient quality to live up to the nation's expectations. As former Germany playmaker Bernd Schuster opined: "Fitness is not the worry, it's the lack of class."

Nick Bidwell

Headline act… Michael Ballack, Germany's best player, beats France's Vikash Dhorasoo during a 0-0 friendly draw last November

The Squad

Key Men

MICHAEL BALLACK
Germany simply cannot do without their captain and the brains of their midfield. In his absence, the team usually look lost. Ballack is a marvellously talented all-rounder and there is nothing he cannot do: tackle and harry, organise the play, shoot powerfully from distance, and threaten in the air.

OLIVER KAHN

His goalkeeping standards have slipped a little since being voted the best player at the 2002 World Cup. But the competitive flame still burns intensely within Kahn and he looks to have done enough to fend off the challenge for the jersey of arch-rival Jens Lehmann.

LUKAS PODOLSKI
Germany's answer to Wayne Rooney. The 20-year-old is at his best in a free-wheeling role just behind the strikers, and his explosive shooting, physical strength and bursts of acceleration make him a permanent threat. However, he has been playing the diva somewhat at his club, Koln, this season.

The Coach

JURGEN KLINSMANN

One of Germany's all-time great strikers, but his appointment as national boss 19 months ago was a gamble since he had no professional coaching experience. However, he has shown himself to be an intelligent and influential leader of men. Friendly, communicative but also ruthlessly single-minded.

	Club	DOB	Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS				
Timo HILDEBRAND	Stuttgart	05.04.79	3	0
Oliver KAHN	Bayern Munich	15.06.69	83	0
Jens LEHMANN	Arsenal (Eng)	10.11.69	28	0
DEFENDERS				
Arne FRIEDRICH	Hertha Berlin	29.05.79	32	0
Andreas HINKEL	Stuttgart	26.03.82	17	0
Robert HUTH	Chelsea (Eng)	18.08.84	14	1
Marcell JANSEN	Monchengladbach	04.11.85	4	0
Philipp LAHM	Bayern Munich	11.11.83	15	1
Per MERTESACKER	Hannover	29.09.84	18	1
Christoph METZELDER	Borussia Dortmund	05.11.80	17	0
Patrick OWOMOYELA	Werder Bremen	05.11.79	10	0
Lukas SINKIEWICZ	Koln	09.10.85	3	0
Christian WORNS	Borussia Dortmund	10.05.72	66	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Michael BALLACK	Bayern Munich	26.09.76	61	29
Tim BOROWSKI	Werder Bremen	02.05.80	15	1
Sebastian DEISLER	Bayern Munich	05.01.80	35	3
Fabian ERNST	Schalke	30.05.79	23	1
Torsten FRINGS	Werder Bremen	22.11.76	48	6
Dietmar HAMANN	Liverpool (Eng)	27.08.73	59	5
Thomas HITZLSPERGER	Stuttgart	05.04.82	13	0
Sebastian KEHL	Borussia Dortmund	13.02.80	24	3
Bernd SCHNEIDER	Bayer Leverkusen	17.11.73	59	1
Bastian SCHWEINSTEIGER	Bayern Munich	01.08.84	23	4
Piotr TROCHOWSKI	Hamburg	22.03.84	0	0
FORWARDS				
Gerald ASAMOAH	Schalke	03.10.78	36	6
Thomas BRDARIC	Hannover	23.01.75	8	1
Miroslav KLOSE	Werder Bremen	09.06.78	50	20
Kevin KURANYI	Schalke	02.03.82	35	14
Oliver NEUVILLE	Monchengladbach	01.05.73	51	5
Lukas PODOLSKI	Koln	04.06.85	20	10

Walking the walk

The Black Stars' arrival at the World Cup means they are finally living up to their billing as one of Africa's leading football powers

GHANA WERE THE first country to win the African Nations Cup four times – in 1982 – a record subsequently equalled by Cameroon and Egypt. So it had long been an anomaly that the Black Stars had never been to a World Cup.

That dream was finally realised in October last year, when Ghana topped their qualifying group for the Germany finals ahead of DR Congo and South Africa after coming from behind.

The comeback was all the more impressive given that Ghana went through four coaches during the campaign and had many line-up changes. But their success merely underlined the considerable talent at their disposal.

The Black Stars began the campaign – a preliminary round tie against Somalia – under German coach Ralf Zumdick, but he left to become assistant at Hamburg at the end of 2003. His replacement, Mariano Barretto, lasted nine months before quitting to join Maritimo in his native Portugal. Sam Arday was caretaker for one qualifier before the arrival of Africa's new miracle man, Ratomir Dujkovic. Ironically, the Serb had plotted the most embarrassing moment in Ghana's national team history when leading tiny Rwanda to the 2004 African Nations Cup at the expense of the Black Stars.

Under Dujkovic, Ghana were undefeated in their five qualifiers last year as they finally booked a World Cup finals place.

However, they suffered the ignominy of exiting at the first round stage of the Nations Cup finals in Egypt. Indeed, the shock 2-1 defeat by Zimbabwe in the final group game threatens to undermine Dujkovic's position.

In mitigation, Ghana went to the tournament without Michael Essien and Sulley Muntari, two key elements of a midfield that has been ably led over the past 12 months by Stephen Appiah.

Ghana are one of Africa's oldest footballing powers, having won the Nations Cup for the first time in 1963. They retained the trophy two years later and won it for a third time in 1978. A 17-year-old Abedi Pele was in the Black Stars line-up during the 1982 triumph.

Ghana have also won the Under-17 World Championship twice, though those successes are now tainted by subsequent revelations of age cheating.

Of the players in those winning youth sides, only Samuel Osei Kuffour has gone on to find success at senior international level. The Roma defender will be a welcome addition to Ghana's back-line in Germany, having been restored to the side in November after a long stand-off with Dujkovic.

Mark Gleeson

Back in the fold… Matthew Amoah was one of the stars of the qualifying campaign, having been recalled by coach Dujkovic

The Squad

Key Men

STEPHEN APPIAH
The driving force of the midfield, Appiah already has a rich club pedigree having played for Udinese, Parma and Juventus in Serie A and now at Fenerbahce in Turkey. Played an invaluable role in leading Ghana to the World Cup finals.

MICHAEL ESSIEN
Africa's most expensive player is now a major name in the international game. Scored vital goals in the World Cup qualifiers.

MATTHEW AMOAH
Restored to the Ghana side by coach Dujkovic after a two-year absence and he recently signed for Borussia Dortmund from Dutch club Vitesse Arnhem. Makes up for his lack of stature with tricky skills and pace.

The Coach

RATOMIR DUJKOVIC
The Serb made his name in African football by leading unfancied Rwanda to the 2004 Nations Cup and then steering Ghana to their first World Cup. The 60-year-old previously coached the national teams of Venezuela and Burma, and was on the staff of Red Star Belgrade when they won the European Cup in 1991.

	Club	DOB	Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS				
Sammy ADJEI	MS Ashdod (Isr)	18.01.73	27	0
Philemon McCARTHY	Fetteh Feyenoord	14.08.83	0	0
George OWU	Ashanti Gold	07.07.82	5	0
DEFENDERS				
Issah AHMED	Asante Kotoko	24.05.82	9	0
Kofi AMPONSAH	Apollon (Gre)	23.04.78	14	0
Aziz ANSAH	Asante Kotoko	07.10.80	8	0
Daniel COLEMAN	Al Nasr (Sau)	01.10.84	5	0
Francis DICKOH	Nordsjaelland (Den)	13.12.82	1	0
Daniel EDUSEI	Aigaleo (Gre)	02.09.80	17	0
Samuel Osei KUFFOUR	Roma (Ita)	03.09.76	55	3
John MENSAH	Cremonese (Ita)	26.11.82	28	0
Anthony OBODAI	Sparta Rotterdam (Hol)	06.08.82	2	0
John PAINSTIL	Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr)	15.06.81	17	0
Emmanuel PAPPOE	Hapoel Kfar Saba (Isr)	03.03.81	24	0
Hans SARPEI	Wolfsburg (Ger)	28.06.76	4	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Stephen APPIAH	Fenerbahce (Tur)	24.12.80	38	10
Haminu DRAMANI	Red Star Belgrade (Ser)	01.04.86	5	0
Michael ESSIEN	Chelsea (Eng)	03.12.82	13	3
Laryea KINGSTON	Lok Moscow (Rus)	07.11.80	9	0
Hamza MOHAMMED	Real Tamale Utd	05.11.80	24	1
Sulley MUNTARI	Udinese (Ita)	27.08.84	12	3
Emmanuel OSEI	Poli Timisoara (Rom)	23.03.81	1	0
Abubakari YAKUBU	Vitesse Arnhem (Hol)	13.12.81	13	0
FORWARDS				
Louis AGYEMANG	Kaizer Chiefs (SAf)	04.04.83	1	0
Matthew AMOAH	Dortmund (Ger)	24.10.80	13	5
Baba ARMANDO	Kryliya Sovetov (Rus)	20.10.79	2	1
Godwin ATTRAM	Al Shabab (Sau)	07.08.80	8	1
Joetex FRIMPONG	Enyimba (Nig)	17.04.82	7	0
Asamoah GYAN	Modena (Ita)	22.11.85	10	7
Prince TAGOE	Al Ittihad (Sau)	09.11.86	3	0

Live and let die

Coach Van Basten does not believe the so-called Group of Death is as tough as all that

PUNDITS, EXPERTS and players were all agreed after the finals draw: Holland, pooled with Argentina, Ivory Coast and Serbia & Montenegro, had landed in the Group of Death.

All except two that is. National coach Marco Van Basten said: "It isn't the Group of Death, it isn't that hard. I can say that it's an interesting group." He was supported by his mentor, Johan Cruyff, who claimed: "It's a good draw for Holland. If Holland qualify for the next round they will face Portugal or Mexico and can go a long way."

Van Basten's reaction again shows his imperturbability and unpredictability. When he succeeded Dick Advocaat after Euro 2004 his main job was to make the team popular with the fans again, even if that meant missing out on the World Cup. His plan was to get the team playing attractive football and also dominating games. He has not yet achieved either of the latter two targets, but then again, nor will the fans have to do without World Cup football this summer.

Eyebrows were raised during the qualifiers as Van Basten took some drastic steps. For example, he called up Ajax youngster Hedwiges Maduro after he'd played only four top division matches. But the coach's judgement was vindicated as Holland reached the finals unbeaten in their 12 games, topping Group 1 by five points from the Czech Republic. Indeed, Van Basten went 16 matches in all before suffering his first defeat – a remarkable achievement for a rookie coach.

Holland's current strengths are the good atmosphere in the camp and the emergence of several new talents. The biggest worry is the team's lack of international experience – only a few of the squad have played at a major finals.

The domination of games has not been achieved for several reasons. The central defenders lack the ability to build moves from the back, while the central midfielder (Denny Landzaat, Phillip Cocu or Maduro) often has to attend to his defensive duties instead of concentrating on keeping possession.

There are also problems up front. Van Basten prefers to play 4-3-3 but apart from Arjen Robben, who is injury-prone, he hasn't got wingers who can create havoc in the opposition defence. He has often used striker Dirk Kuijt or the left-footed Robin Van Persie on the right because Holland do not have a genuine counterpart for Robben on that side. That explains why Van Basten is supporting the attempt of Feyenoord's Ivory Coast-born right winger Salomon Kalou in his attempt to gain Dutch citizenship. The coach has already said that the 20-year-old will be included in the squad should the application be approved before the finals.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

Pulled wide… striker Dirk Kuijt has been played on the right wing because Holland lack a specialist in that position

The Squad

Key Men

EDWIN VAN DER SAR
Goalkeeper and captain who was outstanding during the qualifiers, making some outstanding saves and keeping his cool in a largely inexperienced defence. The 35-year-old seems to get better every year and has benefited from his move to Manchester United from Fulham last summer.

RUUD VAN NISTELROOY

Secured his position as Van Basten's first-choice striker during the qualifiers and is now set to appear at his first major finals at the age of 29.

PHILLIP COCU
Experienced midfield all-rounder who can also play in central defence. The 35-year-old reads the game well and is important in terms of maintaining the team's balance. Decided to continue his international career after Euro 2004 when many of his generation quit.

The Coach

MARCO VAN BASTEN

Former Holland striker in his first coaching job who guided his country undefeated through the qualifiers. Van Basten has chosen to overlook some of the well-known overseas-based players because of their perceived movie-star attitudes, opting instead to call up inexperienced Dutch League players. Johan Cruyff is his main adviser, inspiration and supporter.

	Club	DOB	Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS				
Maarten STEKELENBURG	Ajax	22.09.82	1	0
Henk TIMMER	AZ Alkmaar	03.12.71	1	0
Edwin VAN DER SAR	Manchester Utd (Eng)	29.10.70	106	0
DEFENDERS				
Khalid BOULAHROUZ	Hamburg (Ger)	28.12.81	10	0
Tim DE CLER	AZ Alkmaar	08.11.78	2	0
Urby EMANUELSON	Ajax	16.06.86	0	0
John HEITINGA	Ajax	15.11.83	16	1
Jan KROMKAMP	Liverpool (Eng)	17.08.80	8	0
Joris MATHIJSEN	AZ Alkmaar	05.04.80	4	0
Andre OOIJER	PSV Eindhoven	11.07.74	17	2
Barry OPDAM	AZ Alkmaar	27.02.76	6	1
Giovanni VAN BRONCKHORST	Barcelona (Spa)	05.02.75	54	3
Ron VLAAR	Feyenoord	16.02.85	2	0
MIDFIELDERS				
George BOATENG	Middlesbrough (Eng)	09.05.75	3	0
Phillip COCU	PSV Eindhoven	29.10.70	94	10
Edgar DAVIDS	Tottenham (Eng)	13.03.73	74	6
Nigel DE JONG	Ajax	30.11.84	10	0
Denny LANDZAAT	AZ Alkmaar	06.05.76	20	1
Theo LUCIUS	PSV Eindhoven	19.12.76	3	0
Hedwiges MADURO	Ajax	13.02.85	8	0
Wesley SNEIJDER	Ajax	09.06.84	21	5
Mark VAN BOMMEL	Barcelona (Spa)	22.04.77	33	7
Rafael VAN DER VAART	Hamburg (Ger)	11.02.83	35	6
FORWARDS				
Klaas Jan HUNTELAAR	Ajax	12.08.83	0	0
Dirk KUIJT	Feyenoord	22.07.80	15	3
Roy MAKAAY	Bayern Munich (Ger)	09.03.75	43	6
Arjen ROBBEN	Chelsea (Eng)	23.01.84	16	6
Ruud VAN NISTELROOY	Manchester Utd (Eng)	01.07.76	47	25
Robin VAN PERSIE	Arsenal (Eng)	08.08.83	7	1
Jan VENNEGOOR OF HESSELINK	PSV Eindhoven	11.07.78	6	0

Forward thinking

The team have a strong attack, and the draw has not dampened hopes of reaching the knockout stages for the first time

THIS WILL BE Iran's third appearance at the World Cup finals, and the draw – they face Mexico, Portugal and Angola – has raised hopes among their football-mad fans that the team will make it beyond the group stage for the first time.

Although Mexico are ranked in the top 10 by FIFA and Portugal were runners-up at Euro 2004, Iran supporters are hopeful that their side can nick a point or two from those two games and then beat the other underdog, Angola, in their final group game. African sides are notoriously unpredictable at the World Cup, and the theory is that the Angolans, who are debutants, will freeze in the spotlight on the biggest footballing stage.

However, this optimism has hardly been justified by Iran's recent form. Although the team produced some dazzling performances at the 2004 Asian Cup, where they finished third, they were far from convincing in the World Cup preliminaries. Even the fact that they qualified with a game to spare did not appease the critics. The pressure on national coach Branko Ivankovic was hardly eased by embarrassments in two friendlies – a 3-0 defeat at English second level club QPR last July and a 2-1 home loss to a second-string Macedonia in November.

Since Ivankovic, a Croat, took over in 2002, Iran have played in a 4-2-3-1 formation. However, in recent games, that has changed to a more attacking 4-4-2 to accommodate the growing band of talented Bundesliga-based midfielders and forwards – Vahid Hashemian, Mehdi Mahdavikia, Ferydoon Zandi and Ali Karimi – to play alongside veteran striker Ali Daei.

However, Zandi's lack of first-team opportunities at Kaiserslautern has put his place in jeopardy, with rising starlets Mojtaba Jabari and Moharram Navidkia pressing for inclusion instead. There should be no such problems for Javad Nekounam, whose consistency in the midfield engine-room makes him a shoo-in for a starting berth.

While there are riches in midfield and attack, the defence is in need of repair. Deciding who will play at left-back is a particularly pressing issue, with Sattar Zare, Mohamad Nosrati and Ali Reza Vahedi-Nikbakht all vying for the slot.

All in all, though, the positives appear to outweigh the negatives. With Karimi's flair, Hashemian's aerial ability, Mahdavikia's crosses, Nekounam's tackling and Daei's experience, Iran are well equipped to surprise a few people – if not their fans – at the finals.

Adel Ferdosipour

On our way… Javad Nekounam celebrates scoring the opening goal in Iran's 4-2 victory against Bahrain in the 2004 Asian Cup third-place play-off

The Squad

Key Men

ALI KARIMI
Enjoying a fine start to his spell at Bayern Munich, showing the creative skills that helped make him 2004 Asian Player of the Year. His dribbling ability will be a particularly important asset for Iran at the finals. Karimi was suspended for a year after kicking a referee in 1998, but he has now apparently tamed his wild spirit.

ALI DAEI

The most prolific scorer in the international game, with 107 goals in 143 appearances. Many believe the 36-year-old, who is also captain, is past his best, but Daei's leadership qualities and vast experience in German club football mean he will have a vital role to play at the finals. He plans to retire from international football after the tournament.

MEHDI MAHDAVIKIA
Versatile player who provides many assists, particularly his right-wing crosses. Scored the winner against arch-rivals USA at France 98.

The Coach

BRANKO IVANKOVIC

The former assistant coach made a good start after succeeding fellow Croat Miroslav Blazevic in 2002, leading Iran to victory at the Asian Games that year and third place at the Asian Cup in 2004. But some below-par performances in the qualifiers for Germany put his position under threat.

	Club	DOB	Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS				
Ebrahim MIRZAPOUR	Foolad	16.09.78	61	0
Mehdi RAHMATI	Esteghlal	02.02.83	7	0
Hassan ROUDBARIAN	Pas	06.07.78	0	0
Vahid TALEBLOU	Esteghlal	26.05.82	0	0
Mehdi VAEZI	Peykan	06.03.75	1	0
DEFENDERS				
Mehdi AMIRABADI	Esteghlal	22.02.80	23	0
Ali ANSARIAN	Pirouzi	05.07.77	5	0
Yahya GOLMOHAMMADI	Saba Battery	19.03.71	63	3
Hosein KAEBI	Foolad	23.09.85	40	1
Mohamad NOSRATI	Pas	11.01.82	40	3
Rahman REZAEI	Messina (Ita)	20.02.75	41	2
Sattar ZARE	Bargh	27.01.82	17	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Mohamad ALAVI	Foolad	29.01.82	20	2
Mojtaba JABARI	Esteghlal	16.06.83	3	0
Ali KARIMI	Bayern Munich (Ger)	08.11.78	88	31
Hamed KAVIANPOUR	Pirouzi	25.11.79	49	1
Javad KAZEMIAN	Pirouzi	23.04.81	24	1
Mehdi MAHDAVIKIA	Hamburg (Ger)	24.07.77	89	11
Eman MOBALI	Al Shabab (UAE)	03.11.82	30	1
Moharram NAVIDKIA	Sepahan (Bochum loan)	01.11.82	22	1
Javad NEKOUNAM	Al Wahda (UAE)	07.09.80	67	12
Andranik TEIMORIAN	Abu Moslem	06.03.83	2	0
Ali Reza VAHEDI-NIKBAKHT	Esteghlal	30.06.80	54	12
Ferydoon ZANDI	Kaiserslautern (Ger)	26.04.79	8	1
FORWARDS				
Siavash AKBARPOUR	Esteghlal	21.01.85	0	0
Arash BORHANI	Pas	14.09.83	19	7
Ali DAEI	Saba Battery	21.03.69	143	107
Reza ENAYATI	Esteghlal	23.09.76	16	4
Vahid HASHEMIAN	Hannover (Ger)	21.07.76	27	9
Mehdi RAJABZADEH	Zob-Ahan	22.06.78	2	0

Bite the bullet

A tough first round draw against the Czech Republic, Ghana and the United States could be just what the *Azzurri* need

AS THE WORLD CUP draw unfolded in Leipzig, Italy coach Marcello Lippi found himself surrounded by gloomy Italian faces, all convinced that their group – the *Azzurri* are pooled with the Czech Republic, Ghana and the United States – was one of the toughest of the lot. Worse still was the consideration that if Italy finish second, then they will in all probability face Brazil in the second round.

Lippi, however, refused to be pessimistic, commenting: "We can beat all of these teams even if the FIFA ranking says that we are behind both the Czechs and the USA. At this level, all your opponents are going to be hard. We know, too, that if we don't win our group we will probably face Brazil. That should be a major extra stimulation for us."

Lippi's optimism may not be misplaced. Italy know that if they make their traditionally slow start, they will almost certainly be eliminated. So a tough first round group may be just what the doctor ordered.

Given Italy's failures at both the 2002 World Cup finals and at Euro 2004, the public are more hopeful than expectant. Lippi, however, is quietly confident that he has put together a squad whose unity of purpose and mental toughness could see them go far.

High flier… Roma forward Francesco Totti is back to his best form

For much of Italy's relatively trouble-free run through their qualifying group, Lippi used a 4-3-1-2 formation, in which Francesco Totti played behind two strikers (Luca Toni and Alberto Gilardino). But Lippi is an intelligent and flexible coach, and if necessary at the finals he may opt for a classic 4-4-2, in which Totti plays alongside Toni or Gilardino. Given the form Totti has recently shown for Roma when playing as a lone forward, Lippi will have no hesitation about pushing him up front.

A gaggle of defenders and midfielders are virtually guaranteed a starting place – Fabio Cannavaro, Alessandro Nesta and Gianluca Zambrotta at the back; Mauro Camoranesi, Gennaro Gattuso and Andrea Pirlo in midfield. So Lippi's biggest conundrum may concern his strikers. Alessandro Del Piero's recent form and his experience are such that he seems assured of a squad place. Assuming Lippi will take five forwards, that leaves just one other place, with the contenders being the troublesome but talented Antonio Cassano, born-again Filippo Inzaghi, old warhorse Christian Vieri and new boy Vincenzo Iaquinta.

One other mild concern is the relatively uncertain form of first-choice keeper Gigi Buffon, just back in action after missing the first half of the season because of a shoulder injury.

Paddy Agnew

The Squad

Key Men

FRANCESCO TOTTI
The Roma man is due a good tournament, if only to finally silence those critics who claim he is over-rated and fails to deliver on the big occasion. Given his shameful exit from Euro 2004, Totti will have all the more reason to display the full range of his talent, from inspired playmaker to goalscorer.

ALESSANDRO NESTA

The 29-year-old has long been rated as one of the best central defenders in Serie A – commanding in the air, comfortable with the ball at his feet, a good reader of the game and not short of pace. For Italy, he is quite simply irreplaceable.

GIANLUCA ZAMBROTTA
It may surprise some to see Zambrotta nominated as a "key player". Yet his versatility, much improved defensive work and ability to get forward down either flank make him one of those players who can dig his side out of trouble when the going gets tough.

The Coach

MARCELLO LIPPI

The 57-year-old is one of the outstanding coaches of his generation, having won five Serie A titles and a Champions League with Juventus between 1995 and 2003. Tough, tactically innovative and flexible, Lippi has worked hard to create a team spirit in the *Azzurri* squad.

	Club	DOB	Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS				
Gianluigi BUFFON	Juventus	28.01.78	57	0
Morgan DE SANCTIS	Udinese	26.03.77	2	0
Angelo PERUZZI	Lazio	16.02.70	31	0
DEFENDERS				
Andrea BARZAGLI	Palermo	08.05.81	7	0
Fabio CANNAVARO	Juventus	13.09.73	90	1
Giorgio CHIELLINI	Juventus	14.08.84	5	0
Fabio GROSSO	Palermo	28.11.77	14	0
Marco MATERAZZI	Internazionale	19.08.73	2	0
Alessandro NESTA	Milan	19.03.76	72	0
Massimo ODDO	Lazio	14.06.76	18	0
Cristian ZACCARDO	Palermo	21.12.81	10	1
Gianluca ZAMBROTTA	Juventus	19.02.77	52	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Massimo AMBROSINI	Milan	29.05.77	22	0
Simone BARONE	Palermo	30.04.78	11	1
Manuel BLASI	Juventus	17.08.80	8	0
Mauro CAMORANESI	Juventus	04.10.76	18	0
Daniele DE ROSSI	Roma	24.07.83	14	2
Aimar DIANA	Sampdoria	02.01.78	11	0
Stefano FIORE	Fiorentina	17.04.75	38	2
Gennaro GATTUSO	Milan	09.01.78	40	1
Simone PERROTTA	Roma	17.09.77	21	1
Andrea PIRLO	Milan	19.05.79	21	1
FORWARDS				
Antonio CASSANO	Real Madrid (Spa)	12.07.82	8	3
Alessandro DEL PIERO	Juventus	09.11.74	71	24
Alberto GILARDINO	Milan	05.07.82	12	4
Vincenzo IAQUINTA	Udinese	21.11.79	10	0
Filippo INZAGHI	Milan	09.09.73	48	21
Luca TONI	Fiorentina	26.05.77	15	6
Francesco TOTTI	Roma	27.09.76	49	8
Christian VIERI	Monaco (Fra)	12.07.73	49	23

Tough call

A difficult draw – against Argentina, Holland and Serbia & Montenegro – has lowered expectations for Africa's team of the moment

UNTIL THE WORLD CUP draw, Ivory Coast were convinced they were going to qualify for the knockout stages in Germany despite being at their first finals. After all, they were routinely being described as Africa's team of the moment, with the biggest array of high-quality footballers.

But after being pooled with Argentina, Holland and Serbia & Montenegro that optimism has cooled. "It is going to be almost impossible to get through that; we are so unlucky," was one view from the Elephants' camp.

Defender Cyril Domoraud was less downbeat, saying: "We may be up against it, but we will give it our best shot."

The matches are bound to be technically interesting affairs, and the first game, against Argentina, could be decisive.

The Ivorians certainly have talent. Didier Drogba and Aruna Dindane are an accomplished attacking duo, scoring 16 goals between them in the qualifying campaign as the team edged out Cameroon. Drogba's power and speed complement Dindane's dribbling skills and creative instinct. They also have quality back-up in Bakary Kone and Arouna Kone.

There are decent performers in midfield, too, headed by Didier Zokora and Yaya Toure, a player on the rise. The defence is led by Yaya's brother, Kolo, who has a strong claim to be Africa's best centre-half. Arthur Boka, known as the Ivorian Roberto Carlos, is an entertaining left-back who loves going forward.

However, there are question marks over the defensive abilities of the full-backs, and finding a regular central defensive partner for Kolo Toure has been problematic.

First-choice keeper Jean-Jacques Tizie is injury-prone and does not always inspire confidence.

The team does not have a settled midfield either. In qualifying, PSG's Bonaventure Kalou was used as a playmaker, but the experiment failed. The Ivorians have to decide whether to use three or four midfielders. In such a tough group, it would make sense to use four, but the squad has few good wide players. Kalou is reluctant to play on the right flank, although his ability suggests he would adapt with ease.

Ivory Coast will have one of the most talented squads ever taken to a World Cup by an African team. Franz Beckenbauer, who visited the country in December, was convinced enough about their ability to say: "If Ivory Coast can get out of the group, I can see them getting all the way to the Final."

The problem is that few people realistically expect the Ivorians to get out of the group.

James Copnall

Great together… with so many quality players, Ivory Coast are Africa's most talented team

The Squad

Key Men

KOLO TOURE
An extremely competent defender, and he has to be, given that the back-line is a problem area for the Ivorians. His big-match experience at Arsenal, athleticism and calm demeanour will be key factors for the Elephants in Germany.

DIDIER DROGBA

Both an inspirational leader and a key striker. He scored nine goals in qualifying, the second highest total in the African section. That success has made him a huge star in Ivory Coast, where the locals drink a one-litre beer known as a "Drogba" in honour of their hero's size and strength.

DIDIER ZOKORA
Known to his team-mates as Maestro, he is in fact the motor of his team in the middle of the pitch. Zokora has the potential to be Africa's next great holding midfielder, following in the footsteps of Mahamadou Diarra and Michael Essien.

The Coach

HENRI MICHEL

Frenchman with a pretty good pedigree, having taken his native country to the 1986 World Cup semi-finals and coached north African heavyweights Morocco and Tunisia. But Michel is under fire from the Ivorian media and fans, who do not always understand his tactical and personnel choices. Privately, some federation members are also critics.

	Club	DOB	Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS				
Boubacar BARRY	Beveren (Blg)	30.12.79		
Gerard GNANHOUAN	Montpellier (Fra)	12.02.79		
Jean-Jacques TIZIE	Esperance (Tun)	07.09.72		
DEFENDERS				
Arthur BOKA	Strasbourg (Fra)	02.04.83		
Issoumaila DAO	Toulouse (Fra)	27.10.83		
Cyril DOMORAUD	Creteil (Fra)	22.07.71		
Emmanuel EBOUE	Arsenal (Eng)	04.06.83		
Seydou KANTE	Beveren (Blg)	07.08.81		
Blaise KOUASSI	Troyes (Fra)	02.02.74		
Abdoulaye MEITE	Marseille (Fra)	06.10.80		
Kolo TOURE	Arsenal (Eng)	19.03.81		
Marc ZORO	Messina (Ita)	27.12.83		
MIDFIELDERS				
Kanga AKALE	Auxerre (Fra)	07.03.81		
Guy DEMEL	Hamburg (Ger)	13.06.81		
Abdoulaye DJIRE	Beveren (Blg)	28.02.81		
Emerse FAE	Nantes (Fra)	24.01.84		
Bonaventure KALOU	Paris St-Germain (Fra)	12.01.78		
Christian MANFREDINI	Lazio (Ita)	01.05.75		
Romaric N'DRI	Le Mans (Fra)	04.06.83		
Marco NE	Beveren (Blg)	17.07.83		
Siaka TIENE	Saint-Etienne (Fra)	22.02.82		
Yaya TOURE	Olympiakos (Gre)	13.05.83		
Gilles YAPI YAPO	Nantes (Fra)	30.01.82		
Didier ZOKORA	Saint-Etienne (Fra)	14.12.80		
FORWARDS				
Aruna DINDANE	Lens (Fra)	26.11.80		
Didier DROGBA	Chelsea (Eng)	11.03.78		
Kader KEITA	Lille (Fra)	06.08.81		
Arouna KONE	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	11.11.83		
Bakary KONE	Nice (Fra)	17.09.81		
Kandia TRAORE	Le Havre (Fra)	05.07.80		

FINALS – MATCH SCHEDULE

GROUP A

Fri, June 9	Germany v Costa Rica	Munich	18:00
Fri, June 9	Poland v Ecuador	Gelsenkirchen	21:00
Wed, June 14	Germany v Poland	Dortmund	21:00
Thu, June 15	Ecuador v Costa Rica	Hamburg	15:00
Tue, June 20	Ecuador v Germany	Berlin	16:00
Tue, June 20	Costa Rica v Poland	Hanover	16:00

GROUP B

Sat, June 10	England v Paraguay	Frankfurt	15:00
Sat, June 10	Trinidad & Tobago v Sweden	Dortmund	18:00
Thu, June 15	England v Trinidad & Tobago	Nuremberg	18:00
Thu, June 15	Sweden v Paraguay	Berlin	21:00
Tue, June 20	Sweden v England	Cologne	21:00
Tue, June 20	Paraguay v Trinidad & Tobago	Kaiserslautern	21:00

GROUP C

Sat, June 10	Argentina v Ivory Coast	Hamburg	21:00
Sun, June 11	Serbia & Montenegro v Holland	Leipzig	15:00
Fri, June 16	Argentina v Serbia & Montenegro	Gelsenkirchen	15:00
Fri, June 16	Holland v Ivory Coast	Stuttgart	18:00
Wed, June 21	Holland v Argentina	Frankfurt	21:00
Wed, June 21	Ivory Coast v Serbia & Montenegro	Munich	21:00

GROUP D

Sun, June 11	Mexico v Iran	Nuremberg	18:00
Sun, June 11	Angola v Portugal	Cologne	21:00
Fri, June 16	Mexico v Angola	Hanover	21:00
Sat, June 17	Portugal v Iran	Frankfurt	15:00
Wed, June 21	Portugal v Mexico	Gelsenkirchen	16:00
Wed, June 21	Iran v Angola	Leipzig	16:00

GROUP E

Mon, June 12	United States v Czech Republic	Gelsenkirchen	18:00
Mon, June 12	Italy v Ghana	Hanover	21:00
Sat, June 17	Czech Republic v Ghana	Cologne	18:00
Sat, June 17	Italy v United States	Kaiserslautern	21:00
Thu, June 22	Czech Republic v Italy	Hamburg	16:00
Thu, June 22	Ghana v United States	Nuremberg	16:00

GROUP F

Mon, June 12	Australia v Japan	Kaiserslautern	15:00
Tue, June 13	Brazil v Croatia	Berlin	21:00
Sun, June 18	Japan v Croatia	Nuremberg	15:00
Sun, June 18	Brazil v Australia	Munich	18:00
Thu, June 22	Japan v Brazil	Dortmund	21:00
Thu, June 22	Croatia v Australia	Stuttgart	21:00

GROUP G

Tue, June 13	South Korea v Togo	Frankfurt	15:00
Tue, June 13	France v Switzerland	Stuttgart	18:00
Sun, June 18	France v South Korea	Leipzig	21:00
Mon, June 19	Togo v Switzerland	Dortmund	15:00
Fri, June 23	Togo v France	Cologne	21:00
Fri, June 23	Switzerland v South Korea	Hanover	21:00

GROUP H

Wed, June 14	Spain v Ukraine	Leipzig	15:00
Wed, June 14	Tunisia v Saudi Arabia	Munich	18:00
Mon, June 19	Saudi Arabia v Ukraine	Hamburg	18:00
Mon, June 19	Spain v Tunisia	Stuttgart	21:00
Fri, June 23	Saudi Arabia v Spain	Kaiserslautern	16:00
Fri, June 23	Ukraine v Tunisia	Berlin	16:00

SECOND ROUND

Sat, June 24	Gp A 1st v Gp B 2nd	Munich	17:00	(SR1)
Sat, June 24	Gp C 1st v Gp D 2nd	Leipzig	21:00	(SR2)
Sun, June 25	Gp B 1st v Gp A 2nd	Stuttgart	17:00	(SR3)
Sun, June 25	Gp D 1st v Gp C 2nd	Nuremberg	21:00	(SR4)
Mon, June 26	Gp E 1st v Gp F 2nd	Kaiserslautern	17:00	(SR5)
Mon, June 26	Gp G 1st v Gp H 2nd	Cologne	21:00	(SR6)
Tue, June 27	Gp F 1st v Gp E 2nd	Dortmund	17:00	(SR7)
Tue, June 27	Gp H 1st v Gp G 2nd	Hanover	21:00	(SR8)

QUARTER-FINALS

Fri, June 30	Winners SR1 v Winners SR2	Berlin	17:00	(QF1)
Fri, June 30	Winners SR5 v Winners SR6	Hamburg	21:00	(QF2)
Sat, July 1	Winners SR3 v Winners SR4	Gelsenkirchen	17:00	(QF3)
Sat, July 1	Winners SR7 v Winners SR8	Frankfurt	21:00	(QF4)

SEMI-FINALS

Tue, July 4	Winners QF1 v Winners QF2	Dortmund	21:00
Wed, July 5	Winners QF3 v Winners QF4	Munich	21:00

THIRD-PLACE PLAY-OFF

Sat, July 8	Stuttgart	21:00

FINAL

Sun, July 9	Berlin	20:00

Kick-off times are local

SUBSCRIBE AND GET THE EURO

SEND THIS COUPON TO:

UK World Soccer Subscriptions, FREEPOST CY1061, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3BR

OVERSEAS World Soccer Subscriptions, PO Box 272, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, UK, RH16 3FS (please attach correct postage)

USA World Soccer Subscriptions, c/o Mercury International, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001 (please attach correct postage)

I WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE

- ☐ UK 6 monthly Direct Debit £17.15 (save 20%)
- ☐ UK 1 year £36.45 (save 15%)
- ☐ UK 2 years £68.65 (save 20%)
- ☐ USA 1 year $83.25 (save $27.75)
- ☐ USA 2 years $155.40 (save $66.60)
- ☐ Europe 1 year €64.80 (save €16.20)
- ☐ Europe 2 years €113.40 (save €48.60)
- ☐ Rest of World 1 year £56.00 (save £14.00)
- ☐ Rest of World 2 years £98.00 (save £42.00)

PLUS RECEIVE MY FREE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL BOOK WORTH £29

YOUR DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss: Forename:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode/Zip code:

Country/State

Home tel. no. (inc. country/area code):

If you would like to receive emails from World Soccer and IPC containing news, special offers and product and service information and take part in our magazine research via email, please include your email below.

Email:

Date of birth: D D M M Y Y Y Y

PAYMENT DETAILS

I enclose cheque/international money order for £/€/$_____ made payable to IPC Media Ltd.

Or please debit my ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Switch/Maestro (UK only)

Switch only

Expiry date: / / / Switch Card issue no / Start date

Signature: (I am over 18)

INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

DIRECT Debit

Originator's reference **764 221**

Account no:

Account Name:

Name of Bank:

Address:

Postcode:

Account no: Sort code:

Signature: Date:

(I am over 18)

This offer is only open to new subscribers. *Gift only available to new UK subscribers. The £17.15 offer is only available by Direct Debit for UK subscribers. The closing date for this offer is 30th April 2006. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue, eight weeks for overseas. Your free gift will be delivered separately within 28 days and is subject to availability. **For enquiries and overseas rates please call +44 (0)845 676 7778, fax +44 (0)1444 445 599, or email: ipcsubs@qss-uk.com.** World Soccer, published by IPC Media Ltd (IPC), will collect your personal information to process your order. World Soccer and IPC would like to contact you by post or telephone to promote and ask your opinion on our magazines and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to hear from us. ☐ IPC may occasionally pass your details to carefully selected organisations so they can contact you by telephone or post with regards to promoting and researching their products and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to be contacted. ☐

48R

Join the World Cup countdown. All the essential news and results – only in World Soccer

- Join the most knowledgeable people in football
- Save money off the newstand price
- Delivered direct to your door wherever you live in the world

The Direct Debit Guarantee: This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society. If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change, IPC Media Ltd. will notify you at least ten days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If an error is made by IPC Media Ltd. or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of the letter to us. Direct Debits can ONLY be paid through a Bank or Building Society. Your Direct Debit price will stay the same for one year from start date.

Fanatical about UK football too?

Check out a subscription to Shoot and save £££s.

www.shoot.co.uk/ishx

PEAN BOOK OF FOOTBALL FREE

FREE

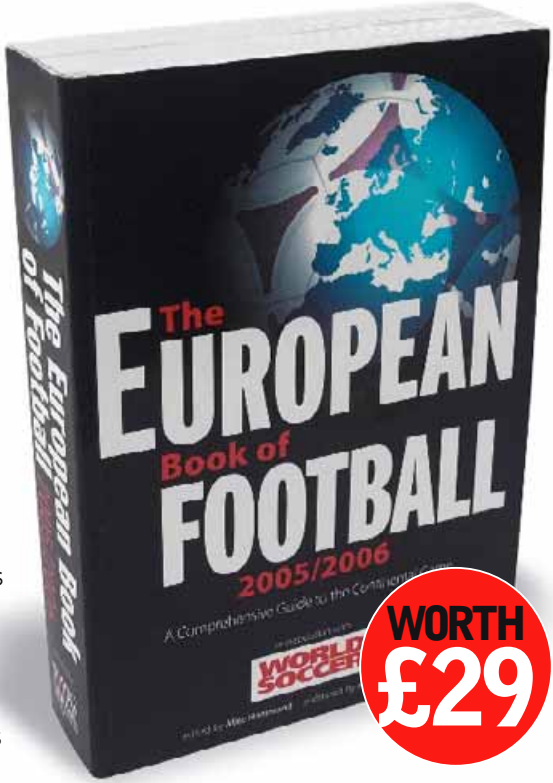
PLUS SAVE UP TO 20%

WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE TO WORLD SOCCER

The European Book of Football is your comprehensive guide to the continental game and features a whole season of European football recorded and reviewed in exclusive and exhaustive detail.

- Complete coverage of all 52 European countries and their top-division clubs
- National team results and player appearances
- Champions League and UEFA Cup line-ups
- League results, scorers, player appearances, tables and domestic cups

PLUS the top 100 players of the season, including profiles, pictures and career records



WORTH £29

Order online
www.worldsoccer.com/iwsbd

Gifts are not available online

Order hotline
+44(0)845 676 7778

LINES OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK, 9am-9pm UK Time.
QUOTE CODE 48R
USA call toll free on 1-888 313-5528 (lines open Mon-Fri 9am-1pm EST)

The
WORLD SOCCER
Essential Guide 2006

Florida Soccer Vacations

Florida Soccer Vacations invites you and your team to compete in weekly organized tournaments playing against some of the best amateur teams from all over the world.

Imagine the line up:

Group1: USA, Brazil, Spain, Argentina.

Group2: England, Venezuela, Mexico, Italy.

Arriving on a Saturday your team will be staying at the fantastic Regal Palms Resort (8 miles from Disney World). Group games will take place on Sunday, Monday and Wednesday. The winner of each group will play in the final on Friday.

Florida Soccer Vacations. The Game and Time of Your Life

Unofficial Amateur World Cup 2006

The Unofficial Amateur World Cup will commence on Saturday June 9th through to June 23rd 2006. Teams from all countries are now invited to submit applications to be part of what will be the most well organized and competitive event ever to be held in the USA for amateur team soccer.

Once your team has arrived at Orlando International Airport (June 9th) you will be collected by Coach and transported to the Regal Palms Resort (for more information on this resort go to www.regalpalmsorlando.com) for what can only be described as first class accommodation. Once there you can relax and enjoy the many facilities this resort has to offer. Training facilities will also be made available. Group games will be held on Sunday 10th, Monday 11th and Wednesday 13th. Winners of each group will play the runners up from another group on Friday 15th. The quarter finals will take place on Monday 18th, semi finals on Wednesday 20th. The 3rd and 4th place play off and the final will be held on Friday 22nd June 2006.

Visit us today and enroll at www.floridasoccervacations.com.